

## Montclair State University Montclair State University Digital Commons

---

Theses, Dissertations and Culminating Projects

---

5-2018

# “An Eye Opener” : The Meaning of Latin@ College Students’ Experiences in a Bilingual Latin@ Family Class

Gloria A. Andrade  
*Montclair State University*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.montclair.edu/etd>



Part of the [Education Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Andrade, Gloria A., ““An Eye Opener” : The Meaning of Latin@ College Students’ Experiences in a Bilingual Latin@ Family Class” (2018). *Theses, Dissertations and Culminating Projects*. 166.  
<https://digitalcommons.montclair.edu/etd/166>

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by Montclair State University Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses, Dissertations and Culminating Projects by an authorized administrator of Montclair State University Digital Commons. For more information, please contact [digitalcommons@montclair.edu](mailto:digitalcommons@montclair.edu).

“AN EYE OPENER”: THE MEANING OF LATIN@ COLLEGE STUDENTS’  
EXPERIENCES IN A BILINGUAL LATIN@ FAMILY CLASS

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to the Faculty of  
Montclair State University in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements  
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

by

GLORIA A. ANDRADE

Montclair State University

Upper Montclair, NJ

2018

Dissertation Chair: Dr. Katia Paz Goldfarb

Copyright © 2018 by *Gloria A. Andrade*. All rights reserved.

MONTCLAIR STATE UNIVERSITY

THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

DISSERTATION APPROVAL

We hereby approve the Dissertation

“AN EYE OPENER”: THE MEANING OF LATIN@ COLLEGE STUDENTS’

EXPERIENCES IN A BILINGUAL LATIN@ FAMILY CLASS

of

Gloria A. Andrade

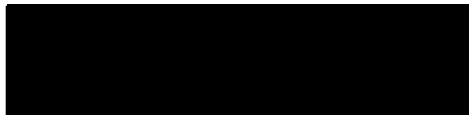
Candidate for the Degree:

Doctor of Philosophy

Dissertation Committee:

Department of Family Science and  
Human Development

Certified by:



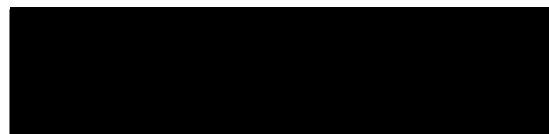
Dr. M. Scott Herness  
Vice Provost for Research and  
Dean of The Graduate School

*April 19, 2018*

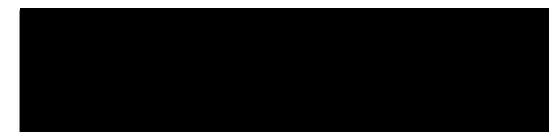
Date



Dr. Katia Paz Goldfarb  
Dissertation Chair



Dr. Jonathan Caspi



Dr. David Schwarzer

## **Abstract**

### **“AN EYE OPENER”: THE MEANING OF LATIN@ COLLEGE STUDENTS’ EXPERIENCES IN A BILINGUAL LATIN@ FAMILY CLASS**

by Gloria A. Andrade

Despite an increasing representation of Latin@s in the college system and in Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSI); Latin@ college students’ in-class experiences have been overlooked, particularly in bilingual courses. A phenomenological study of the Latin@ college students’ experience in a Bilingual Latin@ Family Class that incorporated aspects of the Latin@ culture in the instructional process at a HSI, included ten participant and three one-to-one interviews. The study provided a perspective on the complex reciprocal interaction of the Bioecological systems, the Funds of Knowledge and the Latin@ college students’ experiences. Five themes and additional subthemes were identified: (1) “Eye Opener” (courage, encouragement, cognitive knowledge, awareness of others, and self-awareness), (2) “It was Real Stuff” (teacher, safe and secure), (3) “What We Know is the Real Deal” (diversity, familism, identity, and native language), (4) “A Lot to be Done”, (5) Socio-Historical Time (presidential election, generations). Findings highlighted that interdisciplinary and integrative focus of Bronfenbrenner’s theory and its explicit interest in application to policies and programs of development could be useful for Latin@ students at the higher education level. In addition, the use of Funds of Knowledge to promote personal development, enhance family relations, and to trigger broader social change in Latin@ college students advance their success in the American education and the U.S. society.

## **Acknowledgements**

This descriptive work could not have been compiled without the guidance from my advisor, Dr. Katia Paz Goldfarb, and my committee members: Dr. Jonathan Caspi and Dr. David Schwarzer. I also wish to acknowledge the insightful feedback from my peers Veronica Barrios, Diana Cedeño and Carly Nacer, without their assistance this work could have not been completed.

I would like to extend special thanks to all the participants in this study. Their willingness to support this project and their ability to share their experiences and become vulnerable with me, made this study a success. Their stories contributed to enrich my life increasing my sense of belonging and joy into our Latin@ culture.

I am particularly grateful and in debt to my family whose time with me got less and less as I worked on my degree and whose patience and support encouraged me to the end. To my sister Luz for her time and contribution. To my children: Bryan and Stacey and my granddaughter Skylar Rose because they are my motivation not to remain silent about the Latin@ issues. I will continue the process of discovery and learning about the complexity of our experiences and why it is important that we do not remain invisible.

## Table of Contents

Abstract .....	iv
Acknowledgements.....	v
List of Tables .....	x
Chapter I: Introduction to the Study .....	1
Latin@s in the United States.....	1
Positionality.....	2
Bilingual Latino Family Class .....	4
Demographics of Latin@ Students in Higher Education.....	7
College Outcomes .....	8
Latin@ College Experiences.....	9
Hispanic Serving Institutions .....	10
Funds of Knowledge Theoretical Framework.....	12
Development in Context.....	13
Purpose Statement .....	15
Research Question.....	15
Chapter II: Review of the Literature .....	16
Hispanic Serving Institutions .....	16
Bilingual Latino Family Class .....	18
Curriculum.....	18
College learning community.....	19
Thematic in nature .....	19

Negotiated curriculum .....	19
Funds of Knowledge .....	20
Latino Culture .....	22
Familism.....	24
Ethnic/racial identity.....	25
Gender identity .....	27
Acculturation .....	28
Diversity .....	29
Development in Context.....	30
Conclusion.....	36
Chapter III: Methodology .....	37
Research Question.....	37
Rationale for a Qualitative exploration, Phenomenological Approach.....	37
Design.....	38
Participant Recruitment.....	40
Sample.....	40
Demographics.....	40
Sample size .....	40
Procedures .....	41
Interviews .....	42
Recordings and Transcription .....	44
Analysis .....	45



The framework analysis.....	45
Credibility and Trustworthiness .....	47
Description of Researcher .....	48
Reflexivity .....	49
Researcher Eye Opener Experience .....	49
Chapter IV: Findings.....	55
Eye Opener .....	56
Courage.....	57
Encouragement. ....	59
Cognitive Knowledge. ....	60
Awareness of Others.....	61
Self-awareness. ....	63
It was Real Stuff.....	65
Teacher. ....	66
Safe and Secure. ....	68
What We Know is the Real Deal .....	69
Diversity. ....	70
Familism. ....	71
Identity.....	74
Gendered identities. ....	74
Ethnic Identity.....	76
Native Language.....	78

A Lot to be Done .....	79
Socio-Historical Time .....	82
Presidential Elections. ....	83
Generations.....	85
Chapter V: Discussion .....	87
Research Question.....	87
Limitations .....	100
Implications .....	102
Future directions .....	105
References .....	109
Appendix A: Email to Invite Participants .....	126
Appendix B: Informed Consent .....	127
Appendix C: Interview Questions #1 .....	130
Appendix D: Interview Questions #2 .....	131
Appendix E: Interview Questions #3 .....	132
Appendix F: Local Resources .....	133

## **List of Tables**

Table 1.	Demographics of Participants.....	41
----------	-----------------------------------	----

“An Eye Opener”: The Meaning of Latin@ College Students’ Experiences in a Bilingual

Latin@ Family Class

## **Chapter I**

### **Introduction to the Study**

#### **Latin@s in the United States**

Page (2013) reported that between 1980 and 1990, the Hispanic population increased from 6.4% to 9.0% of the total population. In the decade spanning 1990-2000, the percentage of Hispanics comprising the U.S. population increased by 3.6%, and 3.4%; the decade spanning 2000-2010 reflected the largest aggregate percentage increase by decade among all racial and ethnic groups (NCES, 2010). According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2010), more than half the growth in the total population of the United States between 2000 and 2010 was due to the increase in the Hispanic population, which increased by 43%. Latino is the largest racial/ethnic minority group enrolled at four-year colleges and universities (Fry & Lopez, 2012).

In 2008, 25.8% of Hispanics between the ages of 18 and 24 years were enrolled in colleges and universities, an increase of 4.1% from 2000, 5.1% from 1990 and 9.5% from 1980 (NCES, 2010; Rodríguez, Martinez, & Valle, 2016). Furthermore, the rate of immediate transition to college for Hispanics increased to 62% in 2007 from 57.5% in 2005, 51.6% in 1995, and 46.1% in 1985 (NCES, 2010); an average increase by decade of 5.7% between the years 1985 and 2005 (Page, 2013; Trevino & DeFreitas, 2014).

Despite an increasing representation of Latin@s in the college system and more specific in Hispanic Serving Institutions; Latin@ college students in-class experiences

have been overlooked, particularly in bilingual courses. To promote the advancement of Latin@ college students it is important to understand the extent to which Bilingual Latin@ Family classes develop and empower Latin@ college students.

The term Latin@ will be used as gender neutral and the Bilingual Latin@ Family Class is represented by the abbreviation “BLFC”.

### **Positionality**

Thirty years ago, I became part of these statistics. I relocated to the United States and with that I was assigned some new labels. Labels that can be measured. I became a Latina immigrant, student, parent and professional with no knowledge of the English language and a big desire to succeed in the United States. Throughout the years, my personal experiences in all those different fields helped me become the person I am today. My roles as a daughter, sister, wife, mother, mental health professional, and educator have been influenced by the fact that I am a Latina living in the United States.

As a Ph.D. candidate, I was invited to participate as a teacher assistant in a BLFC that was taught in the fall of 2015 and the spring of 2016. The opportunity to be a teacher assistant for a group of Latin@ college students was priceless for me. The level of engagement, self-reflection, self-learning and learning transactions among members of the learning community were unlike any others I have observed before.

I’ve had the privilege to work with Latin@ families in outpatient programs, schools, social services and in-home counseling. Working with Latin@ families, I heard firsthand their challenges at many different levels. Having children close in age to some of the students, being a first-generation Latina attending college, working full time and

attending school at night, were some of the characteristics that made it easier for me to relate to the students and to identify some of the dynamics taking place in the classroom.

The learning process (i.e., learning about demographics of Latin@s in the U.S., statistics about Latin@s who speak English and Black Latin@s in America) where framing and reframing of their identities occurred made them comfortable with the label “Latin@”. Their roles (e.g., Latin@s succeeding in the U.S., roles as Latin@ students and their contributions) brought up conversations about being the firsts one in their families to go to college and the challenges they were facing. With every little bit of new information, they were having eye opening experiences (i.e., they were able to see the positive aspects of being Latin@ and they talked about their privileges; they talked about their fathers and the reframing process of seeing them as hard-working immigrants instead of absent parents). Feeling in a safe environment, they started voicing their concerns and sharing painful, personal experiences (i.e., impact of immigration policies and consequences in their families). Furthermore, they found enough similarities among themselves; thus, caring and understanding became obvious. They were using words, and expressions that did not need translation because they are unique to Latin@s. These healthy transactions, in my view, had significant implications in the students’ personal and professional development.

The experiences taking place in these classes required the teacher and the teachers’ assistants to engage in team meetings in order to conceptualize and understand the students’ responses. Teachers affected the students; however, students affected teachers as well, in a culturally responsive environment. Members of the learning

community evolved together in a dynamic relationship.

As a human being and scholar, the social implication of this experience was amazing to me. Students developed sensitivities, motivations and skills to work with themselves and others which I strongly believe are characteristics needed in order to sustain any successful society.

This research project came from a deep desire to understand Latin@ college students' in-depth experience in a BLFC. This chapter provides an introduction to the BLFC, demographics of Latin@ college students in higher education, college outcomes, Latin@ college experiences, description of the HSIs in the U.S.; followed by Funds of Knowledge (Gonzales, 2015) and the Bioecological Perspective of Human Development (Bronfenbrenner, 2005) as theoretical frameworks that provide a coherent analytic approach for the researcher to understand the Latin@ college students' in-depth experience.

### **Bilingual Latino Family Class**

“Bilingualism is defined as knowing two languages. Bilingual education is defined as the use of two languages in a classroom setting. Both languages must be used to teach either a homogeneous or a diverse student population in a well-organized program that encompasses the history and culture associated with both languages” (Alexander & Nava, 1976 cited by De La Trinidad, 2015).

**The BLFC** titled “Familias Latinas en Estados Unidos” was a bilingual class, English/Spanish, developed and taught in a newly designated HSI in the New York Metropolitan area, in the College of Education and Human Services, Department of

Family Sciences and Human Development. The purpose of the class was to explore a variety of topics related to Latin@ families in the United States. Upon completion, students were expected to be aware of demographic information on Latin@ families and the diversity among Latin@ families in the U.S. Moreover, they were expected to be aware of globalization in the Latin@ families, the issues related to transnational families, and socio-cultural factors affecting Latin@ families in the U.S.

The BLFC utilized inquiry and negotiation supporting exchange of opinions and ideas among the learning community as instructional strategies. Reflections and re-conceptualizations happened as students learned, shared and experienced new aspects of their Latin@ culture. Aspects of the Latin@ culture were explored in a positive and more challenging way to address the needs of the diversity among the student population:

*Familism.* Family orientation and obligations represent a core value for the Latino culture that guides Latino families in the United States (Garcia-Prieto, 1996; Knight, Gonzalez, Saenz, Bonds, German, Deardorff, Roosav, & Updegraff, 2010). Familism emphasizes obligation, filial piety, family support, and obedience (Stein, Cupito, Mendez, Prandoni, Huq, & Westerberg, 2014). *Acculturation–Enculturation.* According to Yoon (2011), from the perspective of ethnic minorities, acculturation is typically cultural socialization to the mainstream culture and enculturation is retention of cultural socialization to the culture of origin. Acculturation and enculturation encompass dimensions as behaviors, affect, and cognition. *Ethnic/Racial Identity.* People from ethnic or racial minority groups develop their identity as they belong to those groups. Cokley (2007) stated,



When researchers are interested in how individuals see themselves relative to their cultural beliefs, values, and behaviors, ethnic identity is the more appropriate construct to study...however, when researchers are more interested in how individuals construct their identities in response to an oppressive and highly racialized society, racial identity is the more appropriate construct to study (p. 225)

Schwartz, Yip, Rivas-Drake, Syed, Knight, Umaña-Taylor, and Lee (2014) also known as “The Ethnic and Racial Identity in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Study Group” suggested a large degree of heterogeneity in the specific meaning of ethnic and racial identity (ERI). These constructs may be highly salient to some individuals, but less salient to others. Umaña-Taylor, Lee, Rivas-Drake, Syed, Seaton, Quintana, Cross Jr., Schwartz, and Yip (2014) proposed a “metaconstruct to capture experiences that reflect both, individuals’ ethnic background and their racialized experiences, in specific socio-historical context” (p. 21).

The Ethnic and Racial Identity in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Study Group defined ERI “as a multidimensional, psychological construct that reflects the beliefs and attitudes that individuals have about their ethnic-racial group memberships, as well as the processes by which these beliefs and attitudes develop over time” (Umaña-Taylor et al., 2014, p. 23). The content component includes, among others, attitudes and beliefs about one’s group and its relationship with other groups, what one believes, or how one feels about one’s group and process, reflects how one arrives at self-identification choices at any given moment in the period of life (Umaña-Taylor et al., 2014). Besides, the process reflects the

mechanism of exploration, formation and maintenance of their ERI along a developmental timeline that is shaped by socio-environmental contexts within which these identities are developing (Umaña-Taylor et al., 2014).

### **Demographics of Latin@ Students in Higher Education**

As demographic projections continue to predict an increase among ethnic minorities, institutions of higher education can anticipate an increase in college enrollment particularly among Latino men and women (Page, 2013). According to Page (2013), the changes in immigration rates and increasing college enrollment numbers are promoting institutional and service changes. As the United States becomes increasingly more diverse, higher education institutions have the pressure to address diverse Latin@ college students' needs as well as their paths for success. Development and retention of Latin@ leaders becomes a priority.

Bitew (2016) reported that Latino students are a growing number attending institutions of higher education in the U.S, and they are among the many who come from different backgrounds; it is important to pay attention into their academic experience because their educational success has fundamental long-term implications for the U.S. society. According to Bitew (2016), Latino youth brings a variety of cultural knowledge, experiences and linguistic strengths to school. Students highlight the importance of cultivating hybrid identities that draw from, build on, extend racial and ethnic identities and they want schools to understand and affirm those identities (Irizarry, 2015).

Brown, Santiago, and Lopez (2003) in their study about Latin@s in higher education, identified some of their characteristics. Many are first generation college

students, low-income, have a less challenging academic high school education than their peers and enroll in community colleges. They are concentrated geographically in a small number of states and institutions of higher education. A large number of Latinos in higher education are also nontraditional students. They are older, work, attend college part-time, care for family, and in addition, assume multiple responsibilities (Brown et al., 2003; Arbelo-Marrero & Milacci, 2016). Sánchez, Esparza, Colón, and Davis (2010) stated that contrary to studies that report the emerging adult as self-focused and an age of possibilities, the Latino-emerging adult seems to be focused on others and the responsibilities because of their values and limited financial resources. Furthermore, they have to make decisions which benefit their families.

According to Núñez, Hurtado, and Calderón Galdeano (2015), in line with the demographic transformation, reported that four-year colleges and universities are serving at least 25% Latina/o student population and they agreed that higher education in the U.S. is providing nearly universal postsecondary education and in many different institutional types.

### **College Outcomes**

The one thing authors seem to agree on is that college produces quantifiable benefits for individuals (Lagemann & Lewis, 2012). Greater attention has been placed on student outcomes such as graduation rates, credits collected prior to graduation, job and salary expected after graduation (Blumenstyk, 2015). According to Hanson (2014), American higher education moved from character formation as central to their mission to research and production of knowledge, abandoning the question about who our students

became. Hanson (2014) stated that those stories that make sense of who the students are do not fit on charts or graphs. Lagemann and Lewis (2012) reported that the competitive, consumer driven higher education market is missing on focusing of character and ethical growth among students as an original purpose of higher education. The vital purpose goes beyond individual income benefits; learning and personal development outcomes have been considered desirable outcomes of a college degree (Lagemann & Lewis, 2012).

According to Miyamoto, Huertas, and Kubacka (2015), there is a need to develop a balanced set of cognitive, social and emotional skills to be able to better face the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Miyamoto et al. (2015) further explained “Social and emotional skills, also known as non-cognitive skills, soft skills or character skills, are involved in achieving goals, working with others and managing emotions” (p. 148). Because there is more to the college experience than getting a job or higher income, and because the college experience can’t guarantee the job or the income, Cuellar’s (2014) recommendation of incorporating critical perspectives that acknowledge the distinct backgrounds and experiences of underrepresented students are perhaps more important factors in developing those skills needed to succeed. It is important for Latinas/os to leave college with a sense of empowerment that positions them for success (Cuellar, 2014).

### **Latin@ College Experiences**

Trevino and DeFreitas (2014) reported that the current research on Latino college students’ experiences is sparse; however, research on the Latino population is becoming very important. With the growth of the Latino population, Hispanic students are pursuing

higher education more than in previous years, increasing the number of Latinos in the college system (Trevino & DeFreitas, 2014). Some studies focus mainly on the experience of Latino students enrolled in a Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) (Allen, 2016); how they influence the landscape of higher education (Page, 2013); college experiences focusing on instructional programs and support (Bitew, 2016); and enrollment in HSIs (Núñez, Crisp, & Elizondo, 2016) among others. Demands for a program evaluation have focused on measures that are easier to calculate and help justify how funds are being used in the programs produced (Blumenstyk, 2015).

In order to be successful in our efforts to advance Latin@ college students' in the landscape of American education, scholars need to focus on learning more from students' experiences and how their experiences have been influenced by their environment.

### **Hispanic Serving Institutions**

Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs) are federally funded by the U.S. Government as nonprofit institutions that enroll at least 25% full-time equivalency of Hispanic students (Núñez et al., 2015). At least 50% of Hispanic enrollees must require need-based assistance (Murphy, 2013). HSIs encompass considerable institutional diversity and they can offer 2-year or 4-year programs, and be public or private institutions (Núñez et al., 2015).

Since HSIs became federally recognized in 1992, more two-year and four-year colleges and universities have been recognized as HSIs (Núñez et al., 2015).

Furthermore, the HSIs designation was reserved for institutions that applied for a designation by the U.S. Department of Education (Núñez et al., 2015). Title V authorizes

eligible institutions to apply for institutional development and grants to improve and expand their capacity to serve Hispanic and low-income students (Núñez et al., 2015). In 1980, Hispanics represented 4% of students enrolled in all colleges and universities and in 2000, they comprised 10% of the total college enrollment at degree-granting institutions (NCES, 2003). Furthermore, in 2007, 50% of all Hispanic college students attended an institution in which Hispanics represented 25% or more of the full-time equivalent undergraduate enrollment, which were primarily identified as Hispanic-Serving Institutions (NCES, 2010). The number of U.S. Hispanic students enrolled in postsecondary institutions reached a record high share of 16.5% of all college enrollees in 2011, making Hispanic students the largest minority group in the nation's 4-year college campuses (Fry & Lopez, 2012).

Page (2013) reported that in 1999, Latino enrollment in HSIs accounted for 42% of the total enrollment at these institutions, up from 29% in 1990 (NCES, 2003), a 13% increase in the decade spanning 1990-1999. Rodríguez et al. (2016) reported that there are more Hispanic-serving institutions (HSIs) than ever before (370). HSIs are the fastest growing group of institutions targeting underserved groups of students.

Given the current and projected growth of Latinos in the population, research on Latinos higher educational experiences at a HSIs is essential to support the postsecondary educational attainment of this population (Núñez et al., 2015). In order to promote the educational, societal and political advancement of Latinas/os, it is important to understand how institutional contexts at four year HSIs are building the capacity to academically develop and empower Latinas/os (Cuellar, 2014). The enrollment of

Latin@ college students at HSIs is higher than non-HSIs and the research on Latina/o students' experiences and outcomes is less conclusive at these institutions (Cuellar, 2015).

### **Funds of Knowledge Theoretical Framework**

Vélez-Ibáñez and Greenberg (2005), in their studies with binational marginalized families across Mexico and the United States, described Funds of Knowledge as an array of knowledge and skills that are of strategic importance to working-class households. It encompasses family rituals, exchange relations, language practices, kinship networks and other bodies of knowledge found in each culture and influenced by life experiences (Kiyama, 2011).

According to Rios-Aguilar, Kiyama, Gravitt, and Moll (2011), the theoretical framework of Funds of Knowledge has been used in educational research to document the competence and knowledge embedded in the life experiences of under-represented students and their families in order to help faculty to see students and families in terms of possibilities and to challenge the deficit model. Likewise, when incorporated into curriculum, it facilitates the use of resources and provides an explanation for Latino/a academic and non-academic outcomes (Rios-Aguilar, 2010). Conversely, there are limited examples of the use of Funds of Knowledge approach within higher education, outreach programs, or any setting beyond a K-12 classroom (Kiyama, 2011).

Utilizing Funds of Knowledge framework in the classroom is a teachers' option that will offer the opportunity to engage in real-world meaning-making and identity exploration (Wei, 2014). According to Gonzales (2015) Latin@ students who enroll in

HSIs bring with them Funds of Knowledge that are often dismissed by mainstream education. The goal of Funds of Knowledge scholarship is to recognize and validate this knowledge in Latin@ college students (Gonzales, 2015).

### **Development in Context**

There are plenty of theories which provide an insight into how a student develops in college, each with a focus on various aspects of the development that occurs within the general context experience. Chickering and Reisser (1993) described development as a process of infinite complexity and one that includes persons of all ages. Chickering's and Reisser (1993) theory of vector of development focuses on how the individual achieves identity development. Strange (1994) outlines a series of nine prepositions about student development. He stated that the first four prepositions focus on the ways in which students differ - age, interpretation of experiences, styles to approach and resolve challenges, and resolution according to gender, culture and sexual orientation - which is important to understand students' behaviors and structuring learning opportunities. The last five prepositions address the nature of development as individuals reach points of readiness, respond to challenging situations, recognize challenge and support; considering development is increasingly complex and occurs as a result of an interaction of the person and with his or her environment.

Decades of theoretical, methodological and research contributions have supported that developmental science can contribute to enhancing development among diverse individuals across the life span and promote social justice in their community (Lerner, 2015). Theories of change and logical models of human development rest on mutually,



beneficial relationships between humans and their ecology. The application of relational developmental systems models concerning the formulation of a positive youth development illustrates that the outcome of the adaptive developmental regulations exists within the broader ecology of human development (Lerner, Wang, Chase, Gutierrez, Harris, Rubin, & Yalin, 2014).

In the past, developmental science was characterized by two false descriptions: first, genetic reductionism; second, behavior was elicited in response to stimulation encountered early in life (Lerner, Agans, DeSouza, & Gaska, 2013; Overton, 2013). Today, a more progressive conceptual framework conceptualizes the entire life span as involving change, and embracing the importance of individual-context mutually influential relationship within the multiple levels of ecology (Lerner et al., 2014). Scholarship in human development attempts to explain how the relationships between individuals and their context in different portions of the life span – infancy, childhood, adolescent, adult and aging – provide the bases for individual behavior and development (Lerner et al., 2013).

The mechanisms of organism-environment interaction, called proximal processes, are presumed to lead to particular kinds of developmental outcomes that represent the actualization of genetic potentials for effective psychological functioning (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994). In addition, these mechanisms are affected by characteristics of the developing person and the environmental context in which interaction takes place (Bronfenbrenner, 1995; Krebs, 2009). In his own analysis, Bronfenbrenner (2005) points out the importance of the dimension of time where

constancy and change need to be taken into account as well as the person and the environment.

Bronfenbrenner (2005) gives particular attention to developmental changes triggered by life events or experiences. No matter if the experiences are originated by the external environment or within the organism, they alter the existing relation between person and environment, creating a dynamic that may instigate developmental change (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). By focusing on Latin@ college students' experiences in the BLFC, this study contributed to the representation of the impact of the ecological system in the Latin@ college students' success in a non-traditional way. The ecology of human development, and the acknowledgement of the cultural background and experience of Latin@ college students as underrepresented population allowed the possibility of seen affective skills (e.g., courage, encouragement, awareness of others, and self-awareness) as a college outcome that creates a path for success for Latin@ college students.

### **Purpose Statement**

To promote the advance of Latin@ college students, it is important to understand the extent to which BLFC developed and empowered Latin@ college students. The purpose of this study was to seek an understanding of Latin@ college students' experiences in a BLFC.

### **Research Question**

This study was looking to answer the following question:

RQ1: What meaning do Latin@ college students make of their experiences of Bilingual Latin@ Family Class?

## **Chapter II**

### **Review of the Literature**

When the provision of positive high-quality experiences is a priority, higher education makes a significant contribution to the development of individuals (Bitew, 2016). Students, as well as educators in higher education, bring Funds of Knowledge and significant challenges into their academic experience. Cultures, attitudes, values, expectations, assumptions, previous experiences and institutional context among others add complexity to the experiential process. While pursuing higher education, Latin@ college students are provided with the opportunity to finish a degree along with college experiences that impact their development.

To contribute to the success of Latin@ college students in the American society, we need to gain a better perspective on the Latin@ college students' experience in a BLFC and the impact in their development. Accordingly, below is a brief overview of some of the different ecological systems that play an important role in the process followed by a discussion of the theoretical foundation of the current study: Funds of Knowledge (Gonzales, 2015) and Bioecological Perspectives of Human Development (Bronfenbrenner, 2005).

### **Hispanic Serving Institutions**

As of 2013, the proportions of HSIs that were 2-year or 4-year were roughly the same, 52% and 48% respectively, and among 4-year HSIs, 59% were public institutions and 41% were private institutions (Calderón Galdeano & Santiago, 2014). There are 370 institutions designated as HSIs and an additional 277 known as emerging HSIs (Calderón

Galdeano & Santiago, 2014). Nonetheless, these numbers are not consistent as enrollment numbers change year after year and so will the designation of institutions as HSIs (Núñez et al., 2015). HSIs are defined by the demographics of their student enrollment (Santiago, 2006). Although HSIs do not automatically receive federal funding, they are eligible to compete for Title V funding under the *Developing Hispanic-Serving Institutions Program* through which they must propose specific institutional development plans designed to improve services to Hispanic and low-income students (Santiago, 2006; Murphy, 2013).

There have been six types of Hispanic Serving Institutions identified: (1) Urban Enclave Community Colleges, (2) Rural Dispersed Community Colleges, (3) Big Systems 4-Year Institutions, (4) Small Communities 4-Year Institutions, (5) Puerto Rican Institutions, and (6) Health Science Schools (Núñez et al., 2015). HSIs are significantly overrepresented among Associate's public urban-serving multi-campus institutions, 19% of HSIs, compared to 3% of all institutions are represented in this category (Núñez et al., 2015). Thus, HSIs provide greater access to higher education for the Latino population and furthermore, grant more associates and bachelors' degrees to these students than all other institutions (Laden, 2004).

HSIs were founded as majority-serving institutions and evolved to serve increasing numbers of enrolled Hispanic students resulting from the changing in demographics (Nelson Laird, Bridges, Morelon-Quainoo, Williams, & Holmes, 2007). Consequently, HSIs are in the midst of shifting from having White oriented institutional cultures to cultures reflective and inclusive of Latino students. However, for these institutions, the designation of a Hispanic-serving institution is currently a marker of

student demographics as opposed to institutional cultures being relevant and responsive to Hispanic students (Nelson Laird et al., 2007). Through empirical inquiry, authors are seeking to understand the contributions of HSIs to American higher education (Núñez et al., 2015).

### **Bilingual Latino Family Class**

The BLFC was taught in Spanish at a metropolitan university, in the New York area, assigned as a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI). The class was posted in the system as being taught in Spanish, so students would know that it was designed for bilingual English/Spanish students. Twelve students were part of the first class – eleven females and one male. The class lasted the entire semester of fall 2015. Nineteen students were part of the second class – eighteen females, one male. The class lasted the entire semester of spring 2016. The teaching team was composed of faculty and two TA's, who were both Ph.D. students. Following is a quote from the syllabus of the class regarding the intended purpose: “The purpose of this class is to explore a variety of topics related to Latino families in the United States. Specific Objectives of the Course: (1) Become aware of demographic information on Latino families in the USA; (2) Become aware of the diversity among Latino families in the USA; (3) Become aware of effects of globalization on the Latino families; (4) Become aware of issues related to transnational families; (5) Become aware of socio-cultural factors affecting families in the USA.” (From the syllabus of the class).

**Curriculum.** The curriculum of the course was thematic in nature (e.g., Immigration, ethnic identities, family relations, family roles, and transnational families).

Additionally, the curriculum was based on the following theoretical ideals: learning through discussion, teacher-led mini lessons and student-led presentations of current events, among others. Assessments which included classroom participation, group and individual presentations of current events, written prompts completed in class and a final paper were used. Finally, mixing languages was encouraged.

A curricular goal of this class was to allow students the space to integrate multiple aspects of the Latino identity by implementing an intersectional curriculum, followed by an intersectional analysis (Few-Demo, 2014). The BLFC was designed as a safe space for bilingual English/Spanish students where members of the learning community could explore the bilingual experience at the college level and invest in their learning by integrating multiple aspects of the Latin@ culture in a supportive environment that encouraged empowerment.

***College learning community.*** Working together, teacher and students developed a community that experienced a phenomenon and led to developing a community that cared for that phenomenon deeply (Within & Within, 1997).

***Thematic in nature.*** Inquiry-based lessons and a thematic approach were used in the development of the curriculum; this encouraged the creation of a safe space where the exploration of controversial and diverse issues involving Latin@ families was discussed. Students were prompted each class to write their reflections on the issues (Schwarzer & Luke, 2001).

***Negotiated curriculum.*** The negotiation of curriculum implied a balanced power structure between the teaching team and students (Schwarzer & Luke, 2001; Schwarzer,

2008). The class included non-negotiable assignments. However, students had the opportunity to negotiate with the teachers some of the curricular decisions (i.e., themes for discussion during current events, themes for final papers, due dates for some of the activities).

### **Funds of Knowledge**

Moll and González (1994) offered the following definition in their studies about literacy practices of working-class Latina/o children; Funds of Knowledge

...historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills essential for household or individual functioning and well-being. As households interact within circles of kinship and friendship, children are ‘participant-observers’ of exchange of goods, services, and symbolic capital which are part of each household’s functioning. (p. 443)

Vélez-Ibáñez and Greenberg (1992) described Funds of Knowledge as dynamic in content and affected by empirical reality. Vélez-Ibáñez and Greenberg (2005) further reported that those exchanges were influenced by political and economic forces and evolved into general knowledge becoming the “cultural glue” (p. 54) that sustains relations beyond the nuclear household. González, Moll, and Amanti (2005) argued that when teachers learn and understand the everyday lives of their students, the educational process is enhanced.

Kiyama (2011) explored the Funds of Knowledge present in Mexican American families and how Funds of Knowledge can be utilized in a university outreach program to enhance outreach initiatives. Kiyama (2011) stated that families have knowledge about

education and about college specifically, which is important to consider in incorporating them in educational programming. Rios-Aguilar et al. (2011) explored the Funds of Knowledge approach from a capital perspective. They concluded that influences on educational access and success can be better understood by combining these theoretical constructs. Rios-Aguilar et al. (2011) challenged researchers to think about relationship, the process, the dimensions of power between and among these relationships; and if the educational context where the process is situated should continue to be exclusionary.

Rios-Aguilar et al. (2011) reported that the greatest strength of the framework of Funds of Knowledge is that it highlights and values the resources embedded in students, families, and communities. Furthermore, it emphasizes the implications of utilizing the skills and resources embedded in working-class families for pedagogical action. Rios-Aguilar et al. (2011) claimed that working with teachers becomes essential as they need opportunities for meaningful experiences with students and their families. This type of knowledge can be included in the curriculum to make learning more relevant to students (Rios-Aguilar et al., 2011).

Rios-Aguilar et al. (2011) suggest four steps to affect positive educational outcomes: (1) Recognition where Funds of Knowledge are identified and acknowledged; (2) transmission, “underrepresented students [should be provided] the cultural and ideological tools to transform” them into capital for useful purposes (p.177); (3) Conversion “is the process in which students and families convert their Funds of Knowledge into forms of capital” (p. 177); (4) Mobilization, individuals apply knowledge or capital to achieve a specific goal.



Gonzales (2015) stated that faculty members in HSIs have the opportunity to support students in the articulation and dissemination of knowledge. However, the author in her closing statement makes it clear that Funds of Knowledge framework will likely resonate with some faculty more than others because for some of them, development of the contextual knowledge and awareness is enough while others will go beyond to explore a nuanced way, Funds of Knowledge within the community Gonzales (2015). Regardless of the approach, faculty who wish to support their students, need the support of the institutional leadership (Gonzales, 2015).

### **Latino Culture**

Christmas and Barker (2014) define a Latino immigrant as a person born in a Latin American country now residing permanently in the U.S., or a person born in the U.S. to Latin American parents. Further, this definition is expanded to describe a first generation immigrant as someone who immigrates as an adult and a second generation immigrant as one who was born in the U.S. to immigrant parents (Christmas & Barker, 2014). Kim, Brenner, Liang, and Asay (2003), as cited by Christmas and Barker (2014), labeled those who immigrated to the U.S. as a child or adolescent as the 1.5 generation. One out of every five people in the U.S. is a first or second-generation immigrant (Gonzalez & Morrison, 2016; Buckingham & Brodsky, 2015).

According to Gonzalez and Morrison (2016), Latino culture is one where Spanish speaking country of origin is shared; however, they acknowledged the differences among different college students pertaining to their Spanish language skills, generation, immigration status, SES, and country of origin. In addition, culture as a self-sustaining

meaning system incorporates representations of interrelated variables such as, beliefs, values, norms, traditions, language usage, and communication styles (Christmas & Barker, 2015; Barker, 2015; Chao, Kungi, & Yao, 2015). Such representations are often embedded in daily news, arts, folk, stories, and cultural icons, and actively constructed, reconstructed and internalized by individuals becoming the foundation of a society (Chao et al., 2015; Barker, 2015). Disruption in adaptation and social functioning could be the result of being exposed to ideas that are different from those embedded in our own meaning system (Chao et al., 2015).

Perez-Brena, Updegraff, and Umaña-Taylor (2015) reported that Cultural values, in particular, are values specific to members of a group who hold similar ethnic backgrounds, historical experiences, or social experiences providing a sense of meaning to everyday life and capturing a distinctive dimension of the family perspective (i.e., familism, respect). In addition, the process of carrying cultural information, has significant implications for the adaptation and persistence of the culture; however, knowledge about value transmission is limited (Perez-Brena et al., 2015).

Scientific recognition of the belief systems prevailing in the world of the developing person is essential for an understanding of the interaction of organismic and environmental forces in the process of development. For Latinos, the family context is the opportunity to expose children to the values and behaviors associated with their native culture especially for those that differ from the mainstream society. (Umaña-Taylor & Yazedjian, 2006 cited by Umaña-Taylor, Alfaro, Bámaca, & Guimond, 2009, p.47)

Being raised by immigrant parents may invoke a sense of responsibility that provides students with the motivation to excel in the United States. Latinos' sense of familism values motivates success because of the implications of stability and ability to support the family (Bravo, Umaña-Taylor, Guimond, Updegraff, & Jahromi, 2014).

**Familism.** Cultural values of *familism* and *respeto* as the primary cultural difference between U.S. Hispanics and the dominant U.S. group become a secondary cultural difference when we look at the increased emphasis by parents (Lorenzo-Blanco, Unger, Bezconde-Garbanati, Ritt-Olson, & Soto, 2012). Desmond and Turley (2009) define familism as a “social pattern whereby individual interests, decisions, and actions are conditioned by a network of relative thought in many ways to take priority over the individual” (p. 314).

Familism as a Latino cultural value emphasizes obligation, filial piety, family support and obedience (Stein et al., 2014). In 1980, when the first scale was developed for Latinos, familism was conceptualized as being comprised of three factors: familial obligations (obligation to provide material and emotional support), perceived support from the family (the extent to which family members are reliable sources of support), and family as referents (the use of relatives as behavioral and attitudinal referents) (Stein et al., 2014).

According to the authors, later, new key aspects of familism such as, protecting the family name, family reciprocity and interconnectedness, and the subjugation of self for the family were incorporated (Stein et al., 2014). They suggested that obligations, respect, support or cohesion, and family as referent are four central components of

familism. Stein et al. (2014) paid close attention to attitudinal aspects of the familism (the actual beliefs and values), and behavioral aspects or expression of those beliefs as they emerge in development. In addition, familism is a variable that suggests differences across racial/ethnic groups as well as differences in family orientations (Hartnett & Parrado, 2012; Horton, 2006).

**Ethnic/racial identity.** Identity is strongly intertwined with socio-cultural factors such as, language, societal norms, history, and belief systems (Szabo & Ward, 2015). Cultural Identity includes individual's experiences, talents, skills, beliefs, values and knowledge. In other words, who they are, what their status is in their family, school, work, environment and country (Altugan, 2015). The construction of an ethnic or racial identity is considered an important developmental milestone (Rivas-Drake, Markstrom, Syed, Lee, Umaña-Taylor, Yip, Seaton, Quintana, Schwartz, & French, 2014).

Differences between the cultural and societal expectations of the original and the host country become a salient and active identity process that activates a challenging negotiation between two cultures (Szabo & Ward, 2015). These circumstances developed a growing need to understand how cultural transition affects the identity of immigrants and explore the factors that can potentially contribute to the development of a positive and coherent immigrant identity (Szabo & Ward, 2015). Acevedo-Polakovich, Chavez-Korrell, and Umaña-Taylor (2014) stated that for the formulation and understanding of identity, issues of context and life span need to be taken into account as well as the process of exploration and resolution.

The individual view of Ethnic Identity focuses on the values, behaviors, traditions, and cultural knowledge that a person holds and how these change over time as part of identity (Gonzalez, Eades, & Supple, 2014). According to Phinney (2003), ethnic identity refers to feelings of belonging and commitment to an ethnic group. Scholars with expertise in an ethnic identity and racial identity have been considering similarities in how these constructs develop because ethnic and racial identities are considered to follow similar trajectories (Rivas-Drake et al., 2014; Umaña-Taylor et al., 2014). Umaña-Taylor et al. (2014) proposed the term ERI “to capture experiences that reflect both individuals’ ethnic background and their racialized experiences as a member of a particular group in the context of the United States” (p. 23).

The Ethnic and Racial Identity (ERI) in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Study Group elaborated on the evidence that ERI during adulthood entails a continuation of the processes that were salient during adolescence and they inform adjustment during adulthood (Rivas-Drake et al., 2014; Umaña-Taylor et al., 2014).

College experience prompts young adults to greater exploration, deeper reflection and social spheres that bring them to think about ERI in a more complex way reflecting an expansion of the life domains in which ERI could be relevant (Azmitia, Syed, & Radmacher, 2008). In this developmental phase, ERI is no longer considered in isolation, but how becomes increasingly integrated with other aspects of the self; such as, gender identity, social class identity, national identity, career identity to create an overall identity (Umaña-Taylor et al., 2014).

In addition, Umaña-Taylor et al. (2014) bring attention to the social

environmental context as critical to gain a more comprehensive understanding of how ERI emerges and develops. ERI must be understood within the many proximal and distal contexts that individuals are embedded (Umaña-Taylor et al., 2014). Identities emerge and develop as a consequence of the daily experiences, relationships and institutional interactions that individuals encounter (Umaña-Taylor et al., 2014).

**Gender identity.** Gender identities are “gender-relevant self-categorization” that are part of one’s social identity (Schmader & Block, 2015, p.474). The understanding of self as belonging to social groups and accepting the values and significance attached to those groups made social identity salient (Tajfel, 1982). In the Latin@ culture it is marked by the division of what is appropriate for men and women in the culture (Castillo et al., 2015). Castillo et al. (2015) stated that the male gender roles are represented by the script of machismo which consists of positive and negative aspects. The negative side is characterized by aggressiveness, hypermasculinity, and sexual promiscuity. On the positive side, a noble man, who is a hard worker, responsible, spiritual and protects the family and its honor (Castillo et al., 2015).

The female gender is enacted by marianismo which on the negative side implies extreme sacrifices for the sake of the family and submission to men (Castillo et al., 2015). On the positive side, women are spiritual leaders, considered the family pillar, exerting power and influencing the home (Castillo et al., 2015). A social view will focus on reactions, attitudes, process of exploration and the development of emotional attachments regarding the identification and connection with members of the group (Altugan, 2015; Gonzalez et al., 2014). It is the self-concept that derives from the recognition of

membership to a socially identified ethnic group (Altugan, 2015). “Identities are created as we think, talk, and tell stories about who we are, where we have been, and what we have done” (Hanson, 2014, p. 8).

**Acculturation.** It has been defined by Barker (2015) as the ability for sojourners who reside abroad to function in a host culture with some degree of adjustment and cultural change. Much of the early acculturation research assumed that immigrants had to unlearn their home culture and assimilate into their host culture in order to achieve high levels of host-culture competence (Barker, 2015). Years of acculturation research, however, have demonstrated that immigrants prefer to retain their home culture while acquiring host-culture competence (Barker, 2015). The increasing evidence that it is possible to internalize more than one cultural schema and be well adjusted in multiple cultures has led to Berry’s predominant transition in acculturation research (Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder, 2006).

Berry et al. (2006) defined acculturation as “a process of cultural and psychological change that results from the continuing contact between people of different cultural backgrounds” (p. 27). Cultural adaptation recognizes two acculturation dimensions: home-culture maintenance and host-culture participation (Berry et al., 2006). The interplay of these dimensions results in the four distinct acculturation strategies; assimilation (high acquisition, low retention), separation (low acquisition, low retention), marginalization (low acquisition, low retention), and integration/biculturalism (high acquisition, high retention) (Berry, 1997; Buckingham & Brodsky, 2015). This perspective suggests that it is possible for an individual to be highly acculturated to one,

neither, or both cultures and a family can consist of members who hold varying acculturative statuses (Birman, 1998; Somani, 2010; Buckingham et al., 2015).

Assimilation occurs when an individual takes on the beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors of the host culture, and does not wish to maintain his or her cultural heritage resulting in losing his or her own cultural identity (Berry & Sabatier, 2010; Garcia-Joslin, Carrillo, Guzman, Vega, Plotts, & Lasser, 2016). Assimilation is more likely to take place in relation to a host country's political and economic systems than to its value system (Berry & Sabatier, 2010). Separation is when individuals place a value on holding onto their original culture, and at the same time withdraw and avoid interaction with others in the majority culture (Berry, 2008). Marginalization occurs when individuals neither maintain their original culture nor acquire a new one (Berry, 1997). Integration involves simultaneously maintaining one's original culture and becoming fully functional members of the host society (Christmas et al., 2015).

Moreover, Kim (2015) stated that acculturation does not occur randomly following intercultural exposure; instead, it takes place through new learning or unlearning of the old cultural elements. This process occurs gradually and imperceptibly where old cultural habits are replaced by new ones and this is what Kim (2015) describes as experiences of acculturation and deculturation.

**Diversity.** Urquijo-Ruiz (2010) reminds us that "Latin@ cultures are far from homogeneous within themselves and among each other" (p. 153). Cultural diversity presents individuals with challenges as well as opportunities. Kim (2015) supports the idea that students who grew up in predominantly Latino neighborhoods did not see



themselves as minority until they arrived at the predominantly White campus. He stated that from early childhood, we acquire and internalize habits that elude our awareness until we encounter people whose cultural transcripts differ from our own (Kim, 2015).

Although these values of familism, identity, acculturation, and diversity are conceptually distinct aspects of Latin@ culture, Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological theory (2005) provides a perspective of how the relationships among culture and other ecological systems may inform the experiences of Latin@ college students when taking the BLFC.

### **Development in Context**

Bronfenbrenner (2005) states that "science defines development as the set of processes through which properties of the person and the environment interact to produce constancy and change in the biopsychological characteristics of the person over the life course" (p. 109). Moreover, his cornerstone definition of the theoretical structure states:

...the ecology of human development is the scientific study of the progressive, mutual accommodation, throughout the life course, between an active, growing human being and the changing properties of the immediate settings in which the developing person lives, as this process is affected by the relations between these settings, and by the large contexts in which the settings are embedded. (p. 107)

In addition, Bronfenbrenner (2005) wrote,

...development is defined as the phenomenon of continuity and change in the biopsychological characteristics of human beings both as individual and groups.

The phenomenon extends over the life course across successive generations and through historical time, both past and present. (p. 3)

Further, Bronfenbrenner (2005) describes the person context model that takes both the person and the environment into account, jointly with the particular strength of having the capacity to identify what he calls ecological niches; “These are particular regions in the environment that are especially favorable or unfavorable to the development of individuals with particular personal characteristics” (p. 111). This model is improved by the Process-Person-Context-Time Model (P-P-C-T) that “permits an analysis of variations in developmental processes and outcomes as a joint function of the characteristics of the environment and of the person” (p. 115).

Bronfenbrenner (2005) emphasizes the synergistic effects of the theory by revealing the interactive effects between developmental consequences produced by environmental conditions depending on the personal characteristics of individuals living in that environment. Moreover, in the study of development in context, Bronfenbrenner (2005) makes clear the differences in some of the research models. Bronfenbrenner (2005) elaborated on the social address model that views development solely as a product of the environmental factors and processes that remain unspecified. Later, called “new demography” because it takes environment as a label, its analogous form of class-theoretical design is available on the side of the person, and he referred to this type of design as a personal attributes model (Bronfenbrenner, 2005).

According to Bronfenbrenner (2005), the highest expression of development is the person’s growing capacity to remold reality in accordance to human requirements and

aspirations. “Human beings create the environment that shapes the course of human development” (Bronfenbrenner, 2005, p. xxvii). In his theory of ecology of human development, Bronfenbrenner made his focus of attention the phenomenon of development in context (Bronfenbrenner, 2005).

At the core of an ecological orientation and the study of human development “is the concern with the progressive accommodations between a growing human organism and its immediate environment and the way in which this relation is mediated by forces emanating from more remote regions in the larger physical and social milieu” (Bronfenbrenner, 2005, p. 58). Bronfenbrenner and Morris (2006) indicate that the defining properties of the bioecological paradigm are specified in the following two prepositions:

Proposition I. Especially in its early phases, but also throughout the life course, human development takes place through processes of progressively more complex reciprocal interactions between an active, evolving biopsychological human organism and the persons, objects and symbols in its immediate environment. To be effective, the interaction must occur on a fairly regular basis over extended periods of time. Such enduring forms of interaction in the immediate environment are referred to as *proximal processes*. Examples of enduring patterns of proximal processes are found in feeding and or comforting a baby....learning new skills....performing complex tasks, and acquiring new knowledge and know-how. (p. 797)

Proposition II. The form, power, content, and direction of the proximal processes effecting development vary systematically as a joint function of the characteristics of the developing person, the environment – both immediate and remote- in which the processes are taking place, the nature of the developmental outcomes under consideration, and the social continuities and changes occurring over time through the life course and the historical period during which the person has lived. (p. 798)

Bronfenbrenner's ecology of human development is an interconnected system, which looks at the bidirectional interrelation between humans and the environment while acknowledging learning occurs across complex environments (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). Bronfenbrenner bioecological model of Process-Person-Context-Time (P-P-C-T) considers process the core of the model (Krebs, 2009). Bronfenbrenner (1994) stated that what is more revealing about proximal processes is their substantive and theoretical significance as the mechanisms of organism-environment behavioral interaction that drive development. The next construct – person - Bronfenbrenner identified two characteristics: resources of ability/achievement, and dispositional orientation. (Krebs, 2009). In addition, Bronfenbrenner & Morris (1998) added demand as a characteristic that invites or discourages reactions from the social environment.

Tudge, Payir, Mercon-Vargas, Cao, Liang, Li, and O'Brien (2016) elaborated on those four major concepts as follows: first, proximal processes are considered the engines of development, described as particular forms of interaction between organism and environment; second, personal characteristics (demand, resource, and force) which

influence what occurs during proximal processes; third, the four systems (micro-, meso-, exo-, and macrosystem); four, the final element of the P-P-C-T model, time, which compromise three different layers (micro-, meso-, and macrotime). The synergistic interconnection among the four defining properties – proximal processes, person characteristics, context and time – constitutes Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theory P-P-C-T (Tudge et al., 2016; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006).

According to Bronfenbrenner (1994), "The ecological environment is conceived as a set of nested structures, each inside the other like a set of Russian dolls" (p. 39). Per Bronfenbrenner (2005), from the innermost level to the outside, the structures range from the micro to the macro.

*A microsystem* is a pattern of activities, roles, and interpersonal relations experienced by the developing person in a given face-to-face setting with particular physical and material features and containing other persons with distinctive characteristics of temperament, personality, and systems of belief. (p. 148)

*The mesosystem* comprises the linkage and processes taking place between two or more settings containing the developing person (i.e., the relations between home and school, school and workplace). In other words, a mesosystem is a system of microsystems.

*The exosystem*, encompasses the linkage and processes taking place between two or more settings, at least one of which does not ordinarily contain

the developing person, but in which events occur that influence processes within the immediate setting that does contain that person. (p.148)

*The macrosystem* consists of the overarching pattern of micro-, meso-, and exosystems characteristic of a given culture, subculture, or other broader social context, with particular reference to the developmentally instigative belief systems, resources, hazards, lifestyles, opportunity structures, life course options, and patterns of social interchange that are embedded in each of these systems. The macrosystem may be thought of as a societal blueprint for a particular culture, subculture, or other broader social context. (p. 149-150)

Bronfenbrenner (2005) elaborated on three important frames of reference for conceptualizing the developing person. First, characteristics of the person need to make a reference to the environment the person lives in; second, alternative conceptualizations should undertake analysis in the domain of socioemotional and motivational characteristics, usually classified as temperament and personality; third category "...a conception of the person as an active agent who contributes to his or her own development. Correspondingly, personal characteristics are distinguished in terms of their potential to evoke response from, alter, or create the external environment; thereby, influencing the subsequent course of the person's psychological growth" (p. 121).

The effecting development that BLFC could have in students varies as function of their individual characteristics, the environment, the social changes, and the historical period among many others factors (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). The interconnectedness of the systems and the bidirectional relationship between human and environment create

complex reciprocal interaction that drive Latin@ college students' development (Bronfenbrenner et al., 2006).

### **Conclusion**

To make a contribution to the advance of Latin@ college students in the landscape of the American education, it is important to understand Latin@ college students' experiences. The study of BLFC as a unique experience that incorporates aspects of the Latin@ culture in the instructional process at a HSI generates data that informs its impact in Latin@ college students' development. This study highlights the values of students' Funds of Knowledge and the influence of the ecology systems, in order to maximize the benefits of Latin@ college students' educational experience.

### **Chapter III**

#### **Methodology**

This phenomenological study explored Latin@ college students' experiences in a BLFC. In the first section, the research question is presented followed by a description and rationale for the use of a qualitative exploration, and phenomenological approach design. The next section introduces the reader to the design, participants' recruitment, sample, process of data collection and analysis, credibility and trustworthiness. Lastly, the reflexivity process of the PI.

This study aimed to understand Latin@ college students' experiences in a BLFC.

#### **Research Question**

This study was looking to answer the following question:

RQ1: What meaning do Latin@ college students make of their experiences of Bilingual Latin@ Family Class?

#### **Rationale for a Qualitative exploration, Phenomenological Approach**

This research focused in gaining an understanding of the experience lived by Latin@ students in a BLFC. In qualitative methodology, interpretation of experiences, detailed description of the constructed reality and meaning of the experiences captured in the voices and experiences of the research participants, take the researcher into discovering how people make sense of their world and experiences (Salas, Aragon, Alandejani, & Timpson, 2014; Merriam, 2009; Creswell, 2007). The data collected was descriptive, authentic and assisted in exploring and understanding Latin@ college students' experience in new ways (Salas et al., 2014). Participants compared and



contrasted their heritage with the new information acquired in BLFC and how in the context of that information their personal lives were impacted.

Most qualitative research follows an inductive approach, letting the data lead to the emergence of concepts (Yin, 2016). Yin (2016) emphasizes five features of qualitative research; first, the importance of studying people in their real-world roles; second, represent views and perspectives of participants; third, account for contextual conditions such as social, institutional, cultural and environmental; fourth, get insight from existing or new concepts that may help to explain social behavior and thinking; fifth, identify the relevance of multiple sources of evidence. Each student's experience was unique. A phenomenological design was used to return to the essence of the experience (Merriam, 2009). This design helped to understand the meaning of Latin@ college students' experiences in a BLFC.

### **Design**

The emergence of phenomenology as a perspective, has shed light on previously ignored phenomena of lived experiences or life experiences associated with the human existence; reformulating philosophical questions about the everyday existence and re-examining the experience in almost all fields of scholarship (Kumar, 2012; Lavery, 2003). Lavery (2003) stated that phenomenology is essentially the study of all experiences in the world. He believes the question to ask is: "What is this experience like?" as phenomenology attempts to unfold meanings as they are lived in everyday existence, uncovering new and/or forgotten meanings (p. 22). This study is a description

of students' lived experiences in a BLFC; approach that created meaning and a better understanding of the extent of the phenomenon.

Roberts (2013) reported that phenomenology aims to develop insights from perspectives of those involved by detailing their experiences of a particular time in their lives. Three one-to-one interviews provided descriptions of experiences through first-person accounts. Then, these interviews were transcribed and analyzed for themes and meanings, allowing the experiences to be understood.

Caelli (2000), in her study of the changing faces of phenomenological research, concludes that there are two main differences between the American and the traditional European approaches to phenomenology. First, traditional phenomenology which focuses on prereflective experience (as it was lived) is solicited as a means of accessing real description of the phenomena. American phenomenology allows the exploration of thoughts and interpretation of the experience in the data collection and analysis. Second, traditional phenomenology focuses on searching for the universal or unchanging meaning of experience outside the cultural context: "In traditional phenomenology, the assumption appears to be that phenomena from culture to culture, is almost a universal truth value, as it were" (Caelli, 2000, p. 375).

American analysis focuses on describing participants' lived experiences within the context of culture. Caelli (2000) believes that, "the underlying assumption appears to be that phenomenal meanings are culturally constructed and therefore may be found in descriptions of experience per se" (p. 375). This position is a "recognition that it is impossible for humans to think acculturally because our understanding of the world is

constructed by the language and traditions of our heritage” (Caelli, 2000, p. 371).

Phenomenology was instrumental in allowing the PI to explore the meanings of Latin@ students’ participation in the following ways; BLFC provided an advantage, if any, to participants? BLFC experience played a role in the lives of Latin@ college students?

### **Participant Recruitment**

Purposeful sampling offered the opportunity to choose, in a deliberate manner, and to learn from a sample from which the most can be learned (Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2016). According to Maxwell (2005) purposeful sampling provides “a strategy in which particular settings, persons or events are selected deliberately in order to provide important information that cannot be gotten as well from other choices” (p. 88). The participants for the study comprised Latin@ college students who registered and attended a BLFC at the College of Education and Human Services in the Family Science and Human Development department at a Northeastern University during the fall 2015 and spring 2016 semesters. Participants represented different Latin@ countries.

### **Sample**

#### **Demographics**

**Sample size.** Qualitative study sampling has no formula for defining size (Yin, 2016). The sample is intended to maximize information; therefore, what is needed is an adequate number of participants to answer the research questions (Yin, 2016; Merriam, 2009). According to Bryman (2012) in a purposive sample, the size of the sample has to support convincing conclusions. In order to achieve these aims, criteria for selecting was a priority (BLFC participation). A total of 31 students took the BLFC as an elective in

their Family Studies program. There were 10 students involved in the research project

**Table 1**

**Demographics of participants**

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Generation</b>	<b>Country of Origin</b>	<b>Working F/T or P/T</b>
Monica	22	2	U.S.	F/T
Sofia	50	2	Puerto Rico	F/T
Julio	22	2	Puerto Rico	F/T
Isabela	23	2	Dominican Republic	F/T
Valentina	26	1.5	Ecuador	F/T
Ximena	49	2	Puerto Rico	F/T
Mariana	21	2	Colombia	F/T
Rosa	36	2	Puerto Rico	F/T
Luz	34	1.5	Salvador	P/T
Cecilia	21	2	Colombia	F/T

*Note:* Demographics are based on fall 2017 data collected

**Procedures**

Out of the 31 students registered for the classes in fall 2015 and spring 2016, 27 of them were registered in the school at the time of the study. Email was sent to 27 students with an invitation to participate in the research project, explaining the requirements for participation (see Appendix A). An attempt to reach out the four students that were not in school over the phone was unsuccessful. Three students replied

to the first email. A week later, second email went out to 24 students. 7 students interested in participating replied to the second email. At the third week, a third email went to 17 students left on the list; however there were no additional responses. Once students responded, the PI sent participants an electronic copy of the consent form and arranged the time for a one-to-one sit down to complete the first interview. Prior to the interview, students were given time to review and sign the informed consent (see Appendix B) as well as a resource page in case they needed to access counseling services (see Appendix F). Participation was voluntary and students who participated received a \$20 Visa gift card as incentive at the end of the second interview. Students were assigned a pseudonym to ensure anonymity when reporting findings.

**Interviews.** In-depth, three semi-structured interviews with one-to-one encounters between participants and PI elicited information about their experience (deMarrais, 2004; Merriam, 2009) (see Appendixes C, D, and E). The goal was to engage with participants in a conversation about their personal experiences and elicit the meaning they assign to those experiences. This was best captured in a direct exchange between interviewees and interviewer. PI made interpretations of the reality based on interviews, remembering that the perspectives of those involved (PI and participants) were being affected by their ability to recall some of the events or experiences and the effect of some of the questions in their personal experiences. Triangulation was implemented as strategy to support internal validity. Participants were notified that the interviews could last about 45 minutes or more. Rapport was established because the PI was a teaching assistant in the BLFC during the two semesters.

Each participant was interviewed three times using a condensed version of Seidman's (1998) in-depth interview approach where open ended questions were primarily used and the major task was to build upon and explore participants' responses to those questions. The goal was the reconstruction of the participants' experience (Seidman, 1998). The initial interview (see Appendix C) was followed by second (see Appendix D) and third interview (see Appendix E), 3 weeks apart from each other. They were semi structured interviews with the PI guide and included questions which were flexible and allowed the exploration of students' experiences in the BLFC.

At the first encounter, participants returned the consent form already signed, then demographic responses including age, country of origin and generation were collected before the open-ended questions began (see Table 1). Participants were advised they could stop at any time during the interview. Then, participants were asked the open-ended questions which allowed the PI to obtain a thorough description of their experience in the BLFC. Allowing participants to speak freely and discuss their experience was conducive to gather data that facilitated the second and third interviews.

Participants were informed that the purpose of the next two interviews was to provide the opportunity for verification and clarification of key points gathered by researcher in the first interview in order to build trustworthiness. The second interview allowed the PI to follow up on questions from the first interview and provided participants with an opportunity to reconstruct the details of their experience within the context (Seidman, 2006). Third interview encouraged a reflection on the meaning to make intellectual and emotional connections between life events. This process allowed

participants an opportunity for clarification, expansion and verification of the information (Salas et al., 2014).

In addition, interpretative questions allowed researcher to advance on tentative explanations or interpretations of participants' responses or reactions. The interpretative questions offered the opportunity to check on what the researcher was thinking and understanding, creating a better position for more information to be revealed (deMarrais, 2004). The researcher was aware of making adjustments in the interviewing process and probes were used for clarification of what the participant has just said (Merriam, 2009). According to Merriam (2009) what we are doing when interviewing is a concern that goes along with addressing participant voices, construction of the story and deliver to other audience making the interaction a complex process.

***Recordings and Transcription.*** The average length of each interview was approximately 45 minutes. Interview schedules were prepared for this purpose. Qualitative data consisted of "direct quotations from participants about their experiences, opinions, feelings and knowledge" obtained through these interviews (Patton, 2002, p. 4). The interviews were recorded on two small recording devices for transcription at a later day. Detailed descriptions of participants' feelings and the data collection was the result of asking, watching and reviewing the information provided by participants. Participants were informed that the PI was taking field notes of feelings expressed that while not captured on the recording were relevant and important under stage 1 of framework analysis (Smith & Firth, 2011). To comply with security and confidentiality of each participant, the computer, all notes, and audio recordings were kept in a locked cabinet

over the length of the study. Materials will be kept for three years after the completion of the study.

After conducting each interview, the recordings were transcribed through Microsoft Word. These data files were located in a password protected program in a password protected computer.

### **Analysis**

**The framework analysis.** The goal of the analysis was to make sense of the information collected; consolidating, reducing, and interpreting followed by identifying segments of data with common themes that responded to the research question (Smith et al., 2011). The segments became the unit of data, and then a category was assigned to those bits of information (Merriam, 2009).

The Framework Analysis approach was developed in the 1980s at the National Centre for Social Research in the UK. It was created as a strategy to assist a thematic analysis of qualitative data (Bryman, 2012; Smith et al., 2011). The framework approach has been used in health care research to systematically manage and analyze qualitative data (Smith et al., 2011). This approach allows researchers an in-depth exploration of the data, while simultaneously offering a transparent audit trail of the series of interconnected stages guiding the process and enhancing the credibility of the findings (Smith et al., 2011). Framework Analysis was employed to code, categorize, and summarize Latin@ college students' meanings of their experiences in the BLFC. This method was selected because it allowed for a comprehensive review of collected interviews and was driven by participants.



Framework analysis (Smith et al., 2011) involves summarization and classification of data consisting of five stages. Stage one, becoming familiar with all the data through immersion in the data, the PI transcribed all the interviews becoming fully familiar with the data (Smith et al., 2011). Tracking thoughts, musings, speculations and hunches is what is called rudimentary analysis (Smith et al., 2011, Merriam, 2009). Moreover, key ideas and recurrent themes were notated (Ward, Furber, Tierney, & Swallow, 2013; Ritchie et al., 2003). Stage two, identifying and developing a thematic framework that remains open to refinement as the process proceeds (Bryman, 2012; Ward et al., 2013; Smith et al., 2011). The PI became familiar with all the data by listening to the interviews, transcribing the content and reading the transcripts and initiating a draft of key ideas and recurrent themes (Smith et al., 2011). Then PI constructed an index of recurring central themes and subthemes, which represented a matrix. As themes emerge, the PI color-coded according to relevant themes.

Next was stage three, indexing and pilot-charting (Smith et al., 2011). The draft framework developed in stage 2 was applied back to the transcripts and notes. Stage four, summarizing data in an analytical framework by reducing the data to an organized thematic chart, summarizing what was said by participants (Smith et al., 2011, Ritchie et al., 2003). The reduction of the data and summary of what the participants have said in a chart facilitated the process. When inserting material into cells, the PI indicated where in the transcript the fragment came from, and reflected the language of the participants and not making the cells crowded (Bryman, 2012; Smith et al., 2011). Stage five was the mapping and interpretation. Exploring the relationship between the core concepts, the PI

recognized the overarching theme or patterns making sense of what was reported by participants (Ward, 2013; Smith et al., 2011). Comparison and checking of themes and sub-themes back to the original data enhanced and facilitated the interactive and iterative approach inherent to qualitative research (Ward, 2013).

### **Credibility and Trustworthiness**

How a PI can validate when research results are trustworthy is the main concern in qualitative research. Three of the four steps described by Yin (2016) will be used in this study to strengthen credibility: trustworthiness, triangulation, and validity. According to Yin (2016), the goal in qualitative research is to instill trustworthiness in the methods used to generate the data. Trustworthiness is a process that starts with the selection of your study topic, study site and participants, as well as the approach to data collection (Yin, 2016). Triangulation was used to determine if the evidence from three different sources lead to the same finding (Yin, 2016). The use of multiple sources of data collected from participants, was an important way to strengthening the credibility of the study (Yin, 2016; Merriam, 2009). Three interviews were used to corroborate and cross check the data collected. The process helped to ensure that the voices of the participants were accurately portrayed in the research and illuminated the research problem and the outcomes.

In a similar way Merriam (2009) chooses to use the traditional terminology of validity and reliability as main concerns that can be approached through careful attention to a study's conceptualization and the way in which the data is collected, analyzed, and interpreted, and the way in which the findings are presented (Merriam, 2009, p. 210).

Internal validity dealt with research findings versus reality and as a common strategy Merriam (2009) suggests member checks and triangulation using multiple sources of data.

An interview guide with suggested domains was used to ensure full coverage of topics in interview one; however, the interview and specific questions were shaped by participants' responses, balancing direct questions, clarification probes and open-ended follow-ups that allowed themes to emerge spontaneously. When themes emerged that had not arisen before, the PI incorporate them into a second interview. This way, in addition to the direction suggested by the theories, themes will not be limited to initial constructs (Charmaz, 2006).

This research was seeking to provide sufficiently descriptive data of the study's context to enable appliers to assess the transferability of the study to his or her particular situation (Merriam, 2009). The researcher extracted quotes from the interviews that got the depth of the participants' experience so researcher was able to explain the experience shared by participants. Peer review with the researcher's advisor occurred throughout the study providing an outside perspective to assess the findings.

**Description of Researcher.** Merriam (2009) stated that researchers involved with qualitative research become the instruments for data collection and analysis. Furthermore, the researchers have the advantage of expanding their understanding of the phenomenon by clarifying, summarizing or checking on the accuracy of the interpretation. Nevertheless, Merriam (2009) reminds researchers about shortcomings and biases that might have an impact on the study and the importance to identify and monitor them in the

collection and interpretation of data. This section documents my background, characteristics, personality traits, and potential biases as the researcher.

**Reflexivity.** Employed to increase the confidence, congruency and credibility of findings, reflexivity is a valuable strategy for improving qualitative research (Darawsheh, 2014). As a process of self-reflection, it brings awareness of the researcher feelings, actions and perceptions allowing the researcher to make changes to ensure credibility (Darawsheh, 2014). Finley, (2002) reported on the importance to recognize that research is a joint product of the participants, researcher and their relationship. To become reflexive is to be aware of how those relationships are negotiated and the social contexts in which they occur (Finley, 2002).

When reflexivity is used to increase the credibility of the research, it is expected that researchers reflect on their thoughts, actions, assumptions, and expectations bringing them to a conscious level and becoming aware of their influence in the research process (Darawsheh, 2014). Finlay (2002) described and classified a typology of reflexivity with five main types: introspection, intersubjective reflection; mutual collaboration, social critique, and discursive deconstruction. The introspection was relevant to this research project. Introspection involves examining one's own reactions to the research data and to the participants, facilitating a better understanding of the data.

**Researcher Eye Opener Experience.** My own experience as Latina in the U.S. and my predisposition to innovating educational practices were the main reasons why I participated in the development, implementation and assessment of the BLFC. My reflexivity about my Latina experiences has been present from the moment I arrived in

this country and has followed me for the past thirty years. I remember feeling “cultureless” without even knowing that the category existed. I remember feeling lost because of my lack of knowledge about the American culture and the lack of English knowledge. Having the opportunity to participate in the BLFC project and go forward to find out how students would report their experience was important for me. Before starting the interviews, I had the opportunity to go back and reflect on those experiences again. What was my experience as a Latin@ immigrant to the United States? How my experiences were similar or different from the participants?

Thirty years ago, when I was living in Colombia, if someone had asked me about my identity; first I would have been surprised about the question, but probably my answer would have been very simple, I am from Bogota and I am a psychologist. Back in those years, identity, race, ethnicity were not openly discussed. People around me looked the same as me in many aspects of our lives. After I moved to the United States, a lot of things changed which became significant in my life; however, I never identified them as such because at the time, I did not have the time to think about it nor did I understand the long term consequences of some of those changes.

I recall when I came to this country, my name change, my original name was Gloria Amparo Alejo Ospina. When I entered this country my name became Gloria Alejo and a few months later, when I got married, my name changed to Gloria Andrade. No one in my country knows me as Gloria Andrade. Something so basic to my existence had changed, I felt different toward myself. It was a diminution of everything I used to be. Gloria Andrade was a new person to me. I felt that my identity was gone.

In addition, similar to some of the participants, I came to this country as an adult with no knowledge of the language. Not knowing the language put a lot of limitations in my daily life. I was treated different and I felt different. A lot of processing went inside my head, going back and forth between the languages. Inner translations that I did not express because there was not enough knowledge to bring them out. Learning the language became the number one priority in order to adjust to the new culture.

When I arrived here, I had a lot of family support and a lot of resources that became my capital for success. My grandmother had built a great network of people who worked in factories and were willing to hire me immediately. Anyone who came from our country reached out to her for a job opportunity. She was great at networking and finding factory jobs for all of us in the family was not a challenge for her. So, I did start working in a factory and it became up to me how long I was going to be working there.

In Colombia, I was a psychologist; however, here, I was nobody because I did not speak the Language and I was not able to work in that field. I was told by a school counselor at a community college that my degree had no value here and I needed to start from scratch. I was devastated, but that was my motivation to go and search for other options. In the meantime, I started learning English. All these transitions are easier to identify now when I take the time to think about them. Listening to the participants about some of their unique experiences brought back my feelings of losing what I had in order to get something better. This is a feeling that has been present many times in my life and that was identified by some of the participants when they elaborated about coming to the U.S.

Thirty years later, I describe myself as Latina, from Bogota, Colombia, South America. Growing up I had limited exposure to racial, ethnic, or religious diversity. I am a second-language learner who earned a B.A. in Psychology from the University of Santo Tomas, Bogota, Colombia, followed by a Master's degree in Social Work (M.S.W.) from Rutgers University, New Brunswick, New Jersey. Throughout the past twenty-five years I have been working with Latino families in different capacities. I feel very fortunate because this experience has afforded me with a great opportunity to learn about Latino cultures and appreciate the differences among us. It also confronted me with the reality of how little I really knew about other Latino cultures when I arrived in the United States.

My knowledge of the culture was very limited; my understanding of diversity was restricted to the environmental circumstances I grew up in. The neighborhood I lived in was very homogeneous and my perceptions were never challenged by cultural or ethnic differences. However, socio economic status was real and painful. I started calling myself Latina as an adult living outside my country. "Latina" was never an option I had to make while living in my home country. In an effort to understand why I was labeled a "Latina", I attended many cultural competence trainings emphasizing the differences between Latinos and Anglos in the U.S.

Currently, I am a Ph.D. candidate at a large university in the New York Metropolitan area with research interests related to immigrant Latino families. During my course work at the University, I had the opportunity to be a Teacher Assistant in a BLFC. Connecting with the students in the class was possible on a number of levels. First, there was a commonality of background. Second, we all spoke the same language, Spanish.

Third, this class was new to all of us. This opportunity prompted my interest in researching the Latin@ college students' experience.

In preparation for the interviews, I became aware of my own experiences as a Latin@ immigrant who did not know the language and had to overcome cultural, social and academic challenges. I became aware that everyone's values and beliefs do not have to match my own. However, I am cognizant that some values and beliefs are guided by our Latino culture.

It is also probable that how students perceived me affected the research in some ways. As a teacher assistant combined with the fact that I had not yet completed my doctorate, left me in middle ground. While I was an authority figure, I was not at the same level as the professor. Other aspects of the students' perceptions were my gender and age. For some of the students, I was as old as their own mothers, which could impact their perceptions of the course and their experiences in either positive or negative ways or both.

My participation in the BLFC class was a major contributor to my professional growth. Having the opportunity to witness students' process of reframing their identities, their roles and their family roles as well as their reactions to new information was valuable. This experience empowered me as a researcher to find the meaning that Latin@ college students were giving to this experience. I was very excited about the next phase of my research. Learning the meaning of Latin@ college students' experiences in a BLFC. However, I needed to be aware of not imposing my excitement and predispositions onto the participants. The interviews with the participants became an



opportunity to gain a better perspective of the emerging aspects of their experiences.

## **Chapter IV**

### **Findings**

This phenomenological study explored the experience of Latin@ college students in a BLFC. The research question, grounded in the theories of Bioecological Perspective of Human Development explored the bidirectional interrelation between Latin@ college students and their environment (Bronfenbrenner, 2005) and Funds of Knowledge referring to the competence and knowledge embedded in the life experiences of Latin@ college students (Gonzales, 2015; Rios-Aguilar, Kiyama, Gravitt, & Moll, 2011), was addressed: What meaning do Latin@ college students make of their experiences of BLFC? Participants were asked to share their experiences by remembering some of the relevant aspects of the class guided by in-depth, unstructured interviews in three one-to-one encounters with the PI.

This chapter presents the key findings obtained from the in-depth interviews. Participants reported on specific topics of discussion that became significant for them, either because they brought up a deeper understanding, they created a cognitive shift or they motivated a change in their behavior. In the context of the interviews, participants reported if previous thoughts became more relevant, if new perspectives became evident or listening to others reframed previous experiences brought up encouragement and courage for change. Findings showed that some of the participants in the study gained awareness or reported becoming cognizant of some changes experienced while taking the class or after the class was over.

Five major themes were identified from the data and additional categories were

indicated as sub-themes: (1) “Eye Opener” (courage, encouragement, cognitive knowledge, awareness of others, and self-awareness), (2) “It was Real Stuff” (teacher, safe and secure), (3) “What We Know is the Real Deal” (diversity, familism, identity, and native language), (4) “A Lot to be Done”, (5) Socio-Historical Time (presidential election, generations). As an interactive system, the four elements of proximal process, person characteristics, context and time (P-P-C-T) influenced the development of the students (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). In this context, the students’ development worked in a nested fashion where each system (micro-, meso-, exo-, and macrosystem) expanded and contained the smaller one, influencing each other. The results of this research supported the interconnectedness of the systems, the bidirectional of the interrelations among them and the complex environments where learning occurs.

### **Eye Opener**

Awareness was reported as developing understanding and appreciation of their class’ experiences. Participants agreed that BLFC was the first bilingual, Latin@ class that they participated in their years of education. Rosa stated “Honestly, I would love to see more of these classes, and not just for Hispanics.”

The mesosystem as the set of microsystems became the niche for development at a given period of development for Latin@ college students (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). It compromised the process of interrelations between one or more settings (BLFC, family, job) that contained the Latin@ college students. Participants reported on those links and the bidirectional relationship among them.

The sub-themes indicated that self-reflection took place at the following levels:

courage, empowerment, cognitive knowledge, awareness of others, and self-awareness.

**Courage.** Students were giving a resource that was not available before, BLFC created an environment for discussion and reflection. Courage was seen when participants who experienced the need to make a difference in their lives took action. Isabela reported that after she learned about Latin@ families' relationships and more specific triangulation, she was able to identify her role in her parents' relationship and her own relationship with her brother.

That day definitely opened my eyes...I'm always in the middle between my parents...so that day I definitely, opened my eyes. I went home and I actually told them...It was beneficial for me because I got to let my brother fill my shoes, I felt...let somebody else handle it, I already had enough going on, for me to deal with their [parents] relationship issues, I told myself, I can let my brother get another point of view, let me step outside and I did it! (Isabela)

Rosa shared her experience when family roles was a topic of discussion in the class. She indicated that to elaborate about mother's role and listening to others talking about their own experiences with their mothers brought up her awareness of how her mother was being treated. She felt the need to go back home and talk to her sisters and make a change in her own behavior:

That recognition changed a lot. I changed. Now she [her mother] has the recognition she deserves, she has that space and you know I verbalized it to my sisters and it also that changed a lot. I feel that we don't express it enough and that changed. It made me think when was the last time I said something to my mom,

everything we are is because of her [mother], right? And it changed that.

Personally that really impacted me”. (Rosa)

Sofia described feeling uncomfortable and excited when female roles in the work force were explored. As a female and having two daughters, this was close to her heart. She had a permanent, stable job and taking a risk was something she did not think about it until she talked and discussed it with her class peers. She remembered taking some time before she acted upon her thoughts:

I had the conversation with my boss, [getting a salary increase] but I waited. I timed it. I said, okay, so how am I going to approach this with my boss, my performance review comes up every year and the class, I think was in the spring, and our performance review is around June, so it gave me time and I had that discussion with him. (Sofia)

Mariana, 1.5 generation participant, recalled with excitement talking about being Colombian and some of the challenges when you are raised as Latina. Being aware of the influence of the Latin@ culture on her life, she expressed the need to identify herself as Latina when she was taking the BLFC. Mariana recalled her experience when filling out a job application and remembering the class discussion about identity. Her frustration of not being able to identify herself was experienced as follows:

Well, I guess the best example is when I fill out an application, like literally, just 2 weeks ago. I went to do my fingerprints, and the form had race and it was just like White, Black, Asian or other and I was like, I’m not any of these. Like, I’m Hispanic. And then she [the secretary] was just like oh, you have to put one and

I'm like, what do you mean I have to pick one? Like there are so many Latin people in America now, like how is this still not an option, I'm not other, I'm Hispanic and I wrote it on the paper. (Mariana)

**Encouragement.** Participants who became aware of their own capabilities and reported their desire for improvement were reported in the encouragement sub-theme. Working together, teacher and students developed a community that participated and cared for that phenomenon deeply (Within & Within, 1997). Honoring participants' voice was an invitation to develop higher self-esteem and the ability to bring new, positive intentions in their lives. This was evident in some of their statements, "[In the class] I learned a lot and whatever I had to face, I will not be scared anymore as I was when I got to this country" (Valentina). Mariana also shared her feelings, "...just seeing Latino women like [the teacher], she's the Chair of the department, I feel encouraged. Powerful Latino women just kind of like push me more". Rosa and Ximena also shared:

I want to be a role model especially to my daughter, you know. I want her to know that anything that she sets her mind to, she can accomplish, and is not going to be easy, but we are going to push through if we want it that bad, so I would love to be her role model. (Rosa)

it [the class] provoked in me the desire to push myself a little harder and do not allow opportunities to go pass me because if there is an opportunity that comes in my direction, now I'll go for it regardless of what the obstacles I have to face. I think the videos and the class discussion really helped me to see that there is a lot of Latin@ potential out there and nobody can stop us. (Ximena)

**Cognitive Knowledge.** Participants became aware of the learning process. Some of them reported on the content that was new for them, others acknowledged having previous thoughts about the topics and being able to expand on them. Participants recalled exploring their topics of interest addressing their own learning needs. This is an area where participants were able to report on quantifiable knowledge (Lagemann & Lewis, 2012) as well the knowledge embedded on them by the Latin@ culture (Gonzales, 2015). Isabela reported the benefits of learning about Latin@ background, “Learning about my background helped me to understand my Latin@ identity...because we’re so mix you just can’t identify a person from far away, or because she speaks Spanish, it is more than that”. Luz described how participants’ academic knowledge about identity, gender, ethnicity, and race was limited at the beginning of the course:

There was a lot of people in the class that did not know much about gender identity, including myself. It opened up my eyes a little bit more. I did like the fact that we discussed what classifies ethnicity, race. Everyone was lost, we don’t know these thing because we do not talk about them at home.

Mariana found that the topic of immigration open a discussion for Latin@ issues that were new to her:

[In class] we learned so much of the history and Latin@ history of immigration. Why we’re not white just because the paper says that. My skin complexion is white but that doesn’t mean I’m white, and so like, it just brought eyes underneath a lot of Latin@ issues.

Ximena recalled being very excited about the videos showed in class and how they were an eye opener in her experience, “I feel like every single video that I saw, was like WOW! Like eye opener. I really enjoyed it and learned new things and reminded me of others that were in the back of my head”.

Isabela described the importance of learning new Spanish words that she could use at her job.

I think it was amazing because you [teachers] taught us things that for me personally, I didn't know. So being exposed to a professional vocabulary in Spanish was the best because I feel like my Spanish is very basic vocabulary, so to use new words and translate them was great! Now I am more confident to use some of them at work.

**Awareness of Others.** Participants becoming cognizant and understanding of other people's identity, values and behaviors as shaped by multiple cultural differences. Class discussions about family roles, peers' stories of relationships with parents, grandparents, siblings among others were reported as significant.

Luz reported that she was able to understand her parents better after attending the class:

It open up my eyes a little bit more because we had people, let's say the age of my parents, so I would see their point of view, so that would help me understand where they were coming from. I guess the older you are when you immigrate to another country, the more difficult it is to adapt.



Sofia remembered being in class and listening to the 2 generation sharing their own challenges and having an AHA! moment when she realized that her daughters needed more support:

I assumed my children were okay. I assumed that they have the tools and the skills to succeed and I didn't have to do as much coaching or advising because they have it because I did it, I went through the struggle, and so my children really don't have to go through that. But taking the class make me realize that I was wrong, that I needed to support their journey by talking to them about the Latin@ issues.

Participants working with Latin@ families found the class experience very helpful. Gaining an understanding of values that are important to the Latin@ families encouraged respect and compassion for the families they were working with. Valentina saw the advantage in her job and how she could work better with parents and students alike:

It was a big impact in my life because I have to be really open when it comes to parents [at her job]. I have to be there for them and then with my students, so impacted me too. They [parents and students] have their own point of view and their own experiences, I have to respect them and try to grow along with them.

Mariana shared that she gained an appreciation for the diversity in the Latin@ culture.

It [the class] made me aware about the other ethnicities that are within the Latin@ culture and just appreciate where we come from. I just, never cared for it. I never

took it into consideration. I never took the time to think like this is how my culture or my people are perceived. I just never cared for it before.

Cecilia recalled her awareness of seeing another side of the female role when sharing experiences with her peers who were older.

I saw myself and I was like, wait, I'm so young and they're [class mates] mothers and they're still here getting a degree in education, so it's a lot different from the home stay mom. Ages and generations did change for me. Everyone comes from different backgrounds and you learn how people are now, the way they work...and who they are from their experiences and their stories.

**Self-awareness.** Participants took the time to experience their own culture and how it was influencing their values and interactions. Some participants reported on personal changes while taking the class or after the class.

I took the class as an opportunity to look at myself. Personal issues that may have hinder me from being what I want to be. I would like to be as helpful as I can be. I want to make a change and create a difference in the world. (Julio)

Rosa reported that after the class where immigration history and current events in immigration law were presented, she became aware that being a legal resident was a privilege:

[To be legal resident] is a privilege that I wasn't aware. Even though I am Hispanic, I never thought about it. I don't know for whatever reason, "pero no es lo primero que yo pensaba cuando yo entro a un lugar como que me están mirando porque soy Hispana, porque yo naci aquí, verdad?"

Rosa realized about her merging into two strong cultures and trying to cope positively:

I didn't realize what was going on, but it was until I took this class that I realize that I was also part of American, like you're literally merging two very strong cultures, and you find yourself in the middle, coping with it and trying to be happy.

Sofia recalled the class about family roles and feeling strongly affected after realizing her falling into the patterns she always wanted to change:

It, did affect me strongly because I didn't realize that in my own household, the male was having preferences over the females (gender identity), like predominantly in the Hispanic culture, the male is kind of doubted on, and pampered over more than girls and I didn't think I was doing that since I'm an American living here. I figured I'm more modern, but when I went back home, I realize, yes, I am kind of falling into that role of favoring more the male for certain things than my daughters, so made me reevaluate things and changed my behavior.

Valentina found the value in the class discussions to inform herself about options for her future, "I would say having more information and listening to the discussions with my classmates about their point of views about the different topics made me more aware of what kind of future I want for myself".

**It was Real Stuff**

The second theme was identified as *It was Real Stuff*. The BLFC was developed and taught with the purpose of exploring a variety of topics related to Latin@ families in the United States and became one of the microsystems in which Latin@ students were participating. Microsystem defined by Bronfenbrenner (2005) as the “center of gravity” is the complex relationship between the individual and his/her environment in an immediate setting. A microsystem is a pattern of activities, roles, and interpersonal relations experienced by the developing person in a given face-to-face setting with particular physical and material features and containing other persons with distinctive characteristics of temperament, personality, and systems of belief (Bronfenbrenner, 2005).

Isabela as well as Julio reported on the value of having class discussions that did not happen at home:

I’m sitting down in a classroom and we’re talking about these things that they were never discussed in my home. It was just nice being around other Spanish people, you know, because I don’t think we get that a whole lot. (Julio)

Class like this would help because you speak about all different experiences at home. We were like, OH!, yeah my parents do that, you know, and it will bring an awareness...but our parents never spoke to us about it and you know since our class was open discussion, we would talk about it, elaborate and bring a better understanding. (Isabela)

Monica reported that being in class brought more opportunity for reflection and exposure to what she referred to as “real stuff”:

I grew up and never thought about these subjects, but being in the class made me think about this kind of things, so it was real stuff. You think of it more in the class. You actually take time to realize these things. You go back and forth between what you learned at home and what you are learning in school.

Sofia described how having the opportunity to learn about the Latin@ culture brought about awareness of her own family challenges:

Classes like this open up the student to really look at their culture and their families and not only try to identify with their culture, but to historically to try to see what were some of the challenges our families faced in the past, and what are some of the challenges we’re still having.

In the theme of *It was Real Stuff*, two categories were identified from the data and they are indicated as sub-themes: teacher, and safe and secure.

**Teacher.** All participants agreed that having a teacher who is from the same cultural background and speaks both languages was an important aspect of the BLFC’s success. In addition, participants reported the support of teachers who were able to talk about the complexities of the Latin@ culture, the schools and the misunderstandings between schools and families (Gonzales, 2015). Faculty members in HSIs have the opportunity to support students in the articulation and dissemination of Funds of Knowledge (Gonzales, 2015).

It's something that maybe our parents did not teach us, but you [teacher] thought us that you can do whatever it is that you want coming from another country, getting the education that you want. With an American teacher the connection just wouldn't be there at all and I think the class wouldn't be successful if an American would teach the class. (Isabela)

American teacher in front of me speaking in Spanish, I'd be impress that she speaks very good Spanish, but she hasn't lived in the type of society that Spanish culture, there is a lot of culture, there is history to know. The Latin@ teachers are already powerful source by themselves. They [teachers] know the good and bad and they are willing to talk about it. (Ximena)

No matter how much you study it, it's not like the same as living it and this is why I felt in love with this class because everyone there was able to relate.

Everyone there was like yeah, this has happened to me...I'm just saying that this is a class about culture and you can't teach me about my culture if you're not about it. Maybe you do know from the outsider perspective, but I think this class is even more beneficial with someone who's been in the culture, whose part of our culture, who understands families and the system. (Rosa)

If that person [teacher] has not gone through the challenges that we [students] probably have gone, may not have the same kind of impact because we are learning from experience. I mean everyone makes their own mistakes and everything, but it makes a bigger impact if you see that someone already went through those challenges and is willing to talk about it and can guide you. (Luz)

**Safe and Secure.** Participants who perceived that their experiences were validated, that their Latin@ background and their identities were promoting academic and personal growth, reported a safe and secure environment while attending the BLFC.

I think the class had an environment that everyone felt to open, freely share their experiences, their opinions, not judgment because I think the basis of all of us, was having that Latino identity connection. We had a connection there. (Sofia)

You enjoy and you let it be yourself because you're close to Latinos and you know that they're not going to criticize you because you are in the same culture...I mean at the end of the day, they're going to understand you. From the beginning, everybody shared their own experience like, you know, I felt like I was at home. (Valentina)

Participants reported the bilingual experience at the college level as an investment in their learning because there was no judgement, they recalled feeling comfortable while learning about their Latin@ culture.

Spanish is my first language, but every day I speak English more than I speak Spanish, but just being able to just relate to somebody about my mom being a headache in my first language, it was great! I knew I was not able to find that in other classes, they do not offer that sense of comfort. (Mariana)

Participants were clear that the class environment fostered opportunities for sharing personal experiences that otherwise were going to remain hidden.

I do say little things, but not, not as personal as I did in the class. I was more comfortable. I had people around me that shared similar experience as me and

speaking broken Spanish. We were all really nice to one another, so I felt the class was a good safe haven and a good space for all of us to share our experience and we knew that what we said in the class, stays in the class. (Cecilia)

### **What We Know is the Real Deal**

The third theme to emerge was identified as *What We Know is the Real Deal*, where participants expressed that being part of the Latin@ culture, and having the opportunity to share their own experiences were main sources of connection. Participants' life experiences were reported as knowledge that allowed participants to develop and accumulate strategies essential to function in their culture (Gonzales, 2015). In the overarching macrosystem, Funds of Knowledge encompasses bodies of knowledge found in the Latin@ culture reported by participants.

I think that obviously you can read these things and become aware of them, but in order for it and to connect in your mind, I think that being in the culture sort of gives you a real idea what's going on and maybe adjust some misunderstandings. (Julio)

When our classmates or the teachers were telling the stories, I remember being able to relate to some of those stories. I'd be like, OH! Now I know. (Luz)

Another participant indicated that sharing experiences and being able to relate to other people's experience was valuable for her to normalize her own experiences:

I loved it [the class] was a lot of our experience and, we showed so much, and is not like someone is sitting there feeding you information. Everything that we learned in that class we were able to relate to it and make it ours...you lived it,



you experienced it...it is someone telling you, this is how it is and is perfectly normal and everyone else is doing it as well, and this is how you fix it or you know this is a challenge, and this is how it impacts the family. (Rosa)

Sophia reported on the value of sharing in class the knowledge and experiences from previous, present and future generations:

My own experience of living and experiencing the issues that we go through, living in New York, being a second generation, having a third generation with my children, so I bring all those levels of knowledge, you know. The experience, the knowledge and experience my mother had and I have. The stories she tells me and my own experiences with college and my struggle with my identity, before I became proud of being Latina. (Sophia)

Mariana reported about the knowledge shared in the context of Latin@ culture:

We were all able to contribute on to what was being taught and like our own views and I feel that a lot of people in the class had strong contributions to put into the table like it wasn't, like they weren't Americanized. (Mariana)

Four aspects of knowledge and competence embedded in participants' life experience emerged from the data (Gonzales, 2015). Those aspects are indicated as sub-themes: diversity, familism, identity, and language.

**Diversity.** Participants recalled instances in the class where cultural differences among their Latin@ peers became salient. Acknowledging the differences among their classmates pertaining to their Spanish language skills, generation, immigration status, SES, and country of origin is a common phenomenon when students become aware of

their minority status (Gonzalez & Morrison, 2016; Kim, 2005). Participants shared their experiences in statements such as, “I think, that was one of my favorite parts of the class [diversity] because even though we’re all Latinos, it just brings out how similar and yet, at the same time, how different we are” (Rosa). Similarly, Isabela said, “I felt like a book, a good thing that the class didn’t have a book because a book wouldn’t really teach you all we learned”. Other statements made were:

That class wasn’t really Americanized, and so you were able to see different views from American students that come from Hispanic backgrounds...it was so cool. It felt like you were in a different place, like you weren’t in school...it just felt like, a melting pot in a sense. A melting pot within that Latin@ class.

(Mariana)

It was a lot of diversity in that class and even within that diversity, everybody said something that everyone in the class probably related to. People don’t always share their background, so it was nice to be part of it and see all the diversity that’s behind every single student. (Ximena)

**Familism.** Participants recalled moments where familism and respect became the center of the conversation and they were reported as core values in the Latin@ culture. Familism and respect provided a sense of meaning to everyday life and capturing a distinctive dimension of the family perspective (Perez-Brena, Updegraff, & Umaña-Taylor, 2015). Participants reported feeling proud of sharing with their peers their experiences as they felt people from other cultures are not able to understand them. Ximena reported her own experience when she shared in class that as a mother of two,

her children were her priority. Only until they finished college she was able to focus on herself and she was often asked why she was going to college at her age:

By me putting them [her children] first, I couldn't continue to go to school. I wanted them to go to a good school, high school and they both went to separate colleges, now that I'm done with both of them, now I can think of me. I finally feel like this is my priority time. I am proud of it.

Mariana shared her own experience at home in relationship with her mother and how familism and respect are big part of their daily lives. She recalled the value of sharing this experience with peers in her class to find out that she was not the only one:

When it comes down to it, it was good to know that [Latin@s] do what they have to do for their families. There is always somebody you're looking out after, there's always somebody my mom is looking after if it's not me is her sister or my cousin. It's like being a woman, being a Latino woman...you're always willing to do what you have to do for everybody. Family is always the main value like my mom always tells me, at the end of the day, all you have is family. Being respectful, I talk to my mom different from my friends. My own Spanish friends used to make fun of me, like we respond to our parents "sí señora" o "sí señor" and it's a sign of respect and you know sometimes you hear some kids just address their parents like "sí" or like "yes" or "no" like I would never say "no" to my mom.

Luz like Mariana recognized the value of having the opportunity to elaborate about her family and the importance in the Latin@ culture to have family members around:

The family support is bigger and there is always there. I don't know, you have to live around your family because you expect that if you're in trouble, they will help you out. Other cultures I guess, they're not so attached to the family. So I felt normal.

Participants did not miss the opportunity to elaborate on the last day of class when their families came to the classroom and share food, played some games and introduced themselves to peers and teachers. Participants felt recognized as a members of their Latin@ families and valued that one opportunity.

The class, by the way, was great, everyone shared opinions, you know, we didn't judge anyone, but that particular day everyone bought kind of dish, a traditional dish of their culture, what they like to cook even and we were just talking openly and, and we had, I think guest professor come over too. Even my children got to speak to him as well. (Sofia)

That was the only time that I've ever been with my family in school, I'm telling you (laugh) my first semester, it was just great. I thought all my classes would be like that. It was really nice because we got to taste everybody's individual foods from the different countries and then having everybody, every student there with their own families. I was actually proud to show my daughter the university, look this is my class, this is my professor. (Ximena)

**Identity.** Strongly intertwined with socio-cultural factors such as, language, societal norms, history, and belief systems; participants reported their struggle maintaining a balance (Szabo & Ward, 2015).

***Gendered identities.*** Participants who experienced any struggle of the “gender relevant self-categorization” in the dominant culture or in the Latin@ culture were able to recall that experience (Schmader & Block, 2015).

Ximena remember elaborating in class about her own experience between the male and female role in her house. She stated that she had a lot of thoughts about the subject prior to taking the BLFC and her own experience raising her two daughters. It was important for her to speak to the younger generations:

Even though I’m very modern and I raised my daughters very modern, the father is always the main breadwinner and usually making more money, so he keeps the family secure. What happens is that if, let’s say the breadwinner loses his job, that’s when the mom steps in and kind of keeps everything together.

Rosa recalled getting a lot of approval from her peers when she shared her own conflict between the roles of males and females in the Latin@ culture because of her own expectations. She realized that most of her peers felt the same way:

Your own expectations are to be a kind, independent, strong woman and then from there decide what you want with your life, you know? But our culture influences the journey we travel and our expectation. I feel like, I go back and forth because I like a man to be a gentleman... it’s nice to open a door for a lady, to treat a lady with respect, but do I think that the man has to be “el que, lleva

todo a la casa?” Absolutely, no, “yo, no pienso que el hombre sea el que tiene que ser encargado de la mujer y pagar los billes,... yo pienso que cuando uno va a, convivir con alguien, o casarse, o lo que sea, debe de ser un equipo”. It’s a team. That’s how I see it. I think it’s like a partnership.

Luz remember that gender identity of the female role was a passionate discussion in class. She stated that maybe the fact that it was only one male had to do a lot with it. She stated that the female role is still affected by cultural believes and the Latin@ culture in the United States still follows marriage and kids as main roles for females:

...usually in the Latino culture is expected that women around, maybe 25, already have one or two kids and it is changing. However, parents still questioning, when you are going to get married? When are you going to have kids? You’re not going to be able to have kids after 30. It is expected that after certain age, women have had already accomplish this family life.

Monica reported on her believes that gender values are changing was supported by all peers in the class: ”I know how the culture sometimes makes the women feel that they have to be with the children, but woman are taking the opportunity to do what they want. That is empowering, and nice to see”.

Julio, as the only male in the class, recalled talking to his peers about his struggle with the image portrayed of the Latino male by the Latin@ culture. Even though he reported having these thoughts previous to taking the class, he recalled that having the opportunity to speak to girls from the same generation was important for him.

I need to come in with the attitude that, okay, not only is this girl my equal, but I want her to think of me in a respectful way. There is a need for mutual respect between men and women and I don't think that we're [Latin@ men] helping ourselves. Latino male behaviors speaks the opposite. Girls.... party and have fun.

***Ethnic Identity.*** Participants who experienced any concern related to how Latin@ culture is portrayed in the U.S., expressed their feelings about it. The individual view of Ethnic Identity focuses on the values, behaviors, traditions, and cultural knowledge that a person holds and how these change over time as part of identity (Gonzalez, Eades, & Supple, 2014).

Julio recalled the class where stereotypes were the topic of discussion and soon after that he was driving on the local streets and became aware of the loud music played in a car next to him. He remembered laughing inside when making the connection with the class and thinking of the music as a manifestation of the Latin@ culture and how music is portraying the role of men.

With some of our music we're fulfilling a stereotype. A stereotype that people have about Spanish men that they don't have any self-control. Now all they want to do is, is go out and find a girl (silence) is all about having a party.

Monica recalled a class participation where some of the 1 and 1.5 generation shared their experiences seeking a job. She was getting close to graduation and even though she had a job she shared her own struggles with equal opportunity for Latin@ women in the professional market as she was approaching the stage of seeking a new job:

Sometimes I fear because I hear out there, they're [Latin@ women] mistreated or get paid less or something, but sometimes I feel the opposite because we're Latino, you know, we're likely to get hired because they don't want to get sued for not being diverse because businesses get in trouble for that.

Sophia's participation in the class about diversity and sharing her struggle of the Latin@ physical appearance [light skin] and discrimination was revealing to her. She fears for her own children based on her own experience:

I went through the struggle, so I hope my children really don't have to go through that. However, they will experience discrimination. They're going to go through being identified as Latino, biases, all of that, so how do I prepare them for that? What makes a Latina? Is it my light skin? No. It's what you're immersed in, regardless of your culture, regardless of your race, you know that was very revealing to me.

Valentina, another participant said, "I feel like that there is no balance between my culture and the American culture. But, we had to go along with that and learn to live with that". Mariana explained how her struggles started at a young age. Her relationship with her mother experienced some challenges because of the struggle between the American and Latin@ culture. When sharing the experience in class, I felt better. I was proud:

As a young kid I always had like conflict with my mom. My mom said just because you were born here doesn't mean you are American like you are Colombian and it was always a constant battle...but, now that I'm older I



appreciate the Colombian values, but still now.....I always have my mom like in the back of my ear, Mariana is like this because we're Colombian and this is how we see things.... my Colombian values tend to overpower how I see things, but then, I always like, I'm willing to understand why American culture do things different. I'm willing to understand it, but my Colombian culture tends to always overpower it, because it's just who I am, which I realize now.

**Native Language.** Some of the participants recalled discriminatory experiences in a circumstances that they did or did not speak Spanish. Participants reported language as one of the most important values in the Latin@ culture and one of the main concepts in the definition of acculturation (Gil, Wagner, & Vega, 2000). Julio recalled how language was a main aspect in his life, leading to feelings of non-belonging. Participating in the BLFC and not being judge was a relief:

Growing up, people would say that I wasn't Hispanic because I didn't speak the language. When I was in school, the Hispanics would be like, you're not Spanish, you don't speak Spanish and then my Caucasian friends, or people from other cultures, were like, wait, you are Hispanic, you don't fit in here, you know...I really didn't fit into a particular group.

Ximena recalled her experience after starting the BLFC class and realizing that her children speak little Spanish:

If I would've realized back then how important language was, I would've made an effort to make sure that I spoke only Spanish, but I didn't give a thought to it. I thought it would be like, ok. They [her children] are going to learn it the same

way I learned it, well, you know, is just totally different because we spoke a lot Spanish back then and that's how I acquired the language.

Sofia reported on her own frustration for not being fluent in Spanish when she started attending the class:

I don't know if it's ashamed, but I felt bad that I couldn't speak more fluent Spanish because I would've wanted to. I would've wanted to gage more my own language and, you know? So, I have to revert to speaking English and I think it took a little bit away from the conversation.

Luz shared the importance that expressing herself in her own language at a college level had for her:

I really liked the class because one of the papers I wrote about my teaching program was in Spanish, I was able to express myself in my own language that was like really important for me. It was a class that I enjoyed it. There was a lot of interaction between everyone you know, and we were able to speak Spanish, write in Spanish if you wanted to.

Having Funds of Knowledge as a learning tool was reported by participants as an opportunity for engagement in a real-world meaning and identity exploration (Wei, 2014). Participants recalled seeing themselves and their families in terms of possibilities for transformation.

### **A Lot to be Done**

The four theme was identified as *A Lot to be Done*. This theme best described the participants' perception about the Institution and how the events and decisions taking at

this level could affect their development. As described by Bronfenbrenner (2005), the exosystem encompasses the linkage and processes taking place between two or more settings, at least one of which does not ordinarily contain the developing person, but in which events occur that influence processes within the immediate setting that does contain that person. *A Lot to be Done* made reference to the academic institution and more specific to the HSI accreditation because of the influence it plays in the landscaping of Latin@ college students' success.

In this particular study, none of the participants reported being aware that the institution in which they were matriculated at the time of the class was in the process to gain HSI accreditation and that the institution became a HSI in March 2016. HSIs are oriented to serve an increasing number of enrolled Hispanic students as a result of the demographics as opposed to institutional cultures (Nelson Laird et al., 2007).

I know that [the school] became like one of the top schools like, for Hispanics or something, but a Hispanic Serving Institution, I don't know what is that?...Most of them [friends] do not know about it either. (Cecilia)

The data reflects some of students' expectations after they were informed about the role of the HSIs. HSIs play a significant role in United States higher education because they are expected to build capacity to respond to Latin@ college student's needs (Gonzales, 2015). Some participants commented on recommendations they would like to make for the future of the class and Latin@ students' participation.

I think if you got this [the class] to be a requirement for the program, I think that will at least say to people who are registering for the class, oh, this is an important

class, not only do I have to get a grade on it, but I have the opportunity to learn something from it. The university would not be putting this class in as a requirement if it didn't mean something, so I think that's going to help. I mean, the wheel is already turning. (Julio)

Honestly, I love to see more like of this classes. Classes that teach about our background and not just us in the Hispanic culture, but everyone. There are a lot of Hispanics here and I think we should embrace it. (Rosa)

Classes like this one help you a lot because they open up your eyes a lot. To see other people's views, and I've heard they have clubs and stuff like that for Latinos, but I've never been part of it maybe because I'm a commuter, I don't have the time to participate, but I do hear they have some things. (Luz)

Sofia and Isabel elaborated on the struggle for first Latin@ generation attending college and their expectations of getting support from the school:

At one point you're very proud, especially if you're the first one going to college in your family. However, is challenging because sometimes you don't have all the tools that some of the American's students have...I think that puts more pressure on you, to excel, to complete this, and to do it right. We need resources. We need people who can understand us and our needs and be able to help us. (Sofia)

School is here to help us with our dreams, with our goals. To educate us every way possible and not to say, no to us, never to say, no that we are not capable of doing something, you know specially the professors....if you have a professor that

actually motivates you, that speaks to you and encourages you, I feel like that's also part of your success. (Isabela)

Rosa addressed how the age difference is an important factor and a challenge in order to increase Latin@ student's participation in HSIs:

I think the school can do more. I think that this class is definitely the first step, but I honestly, there is a lot to be done and I honestly, I don't know where to start. Again, there is definitely an age difference because I don't spend my time in campus, but I do have classmates and peers that are younger, obviously, and spend that time and I feel that they need to be involved in this learning process. They need to be able to gather together and come together as a unit, and empower each other. Otherwise, we are just "hormiguitas por ahi regadas" (laughter).

Another participant reported the importance of getting families involved in the educational process, "If families are involved, I think the families will push the student to continue and do better and stay in the school" (Ximena). The value of education is supported by the role of the Latin@ family (Bravo et al., 2014).

### **Socio-Historical Time**

Consistent with the bioecological model (Bronfenbrenner, 2005) participants reported on the importance of the *Socio-Historical Time* in the country at the time they participated in the BLFC. The macrotime focusing on the changing expectations and events in the larger society recalled on two major experiences for participants: The presidential elections taking place at the time of the class and the opportunity to share and learn from peers that were from different generations.

**Presidential Elections.** Participants remembered some of the discussions that followed the presentations and videos about events surrounding the election, major consequences for immigrants, and community reactions as a result of the process.

Isabela recalled those discussions and the importance of Latin@s' contribution to the progress of the country and her concerns on consequences of not having Latin@s in this country.

I honestly think it actually made us like sit back and analyze what would happen if we were all not be here, like no Latinos at all in this country. How would this country manage itself, so it is definitely a big thing, we were scared. I was very scared what would happen?

Julio recalled some of the arguments presented in class and he manifested his concern about the treatment of immigrants because of the negative feelings and misconceptions that the election created in the community. He reported that we are not doing enough:

[Elections] was having an impact creating misconceptions, hatred and anger that are still going on in our country right now. I'm living in Paterson now and I think about it a lot. We need to face problems that are right in our face, this is something that I don't think that we fully addressed. I think they [immigrants] are to be treated with the same sort of respect and compassion that you would anybody else.

Ximena reported becoming aware of what was going on at the time of elections by listening to her peers talking about long term consequences for some of the Latin@

families. She felt that those consequences came too soon:

It was a big impact to a lot of people because we were okay, but now with a new presidency coming they were talking about deporting immigrants and that, you know, that is very scary because that could be anybody in my family, your family, any student's family. ....America is like now we have to be in fear that our family members can be deported for any reason, any reason which is bizarre. We are living in a collective fear.

Valentina addressed the uncertainty of not knowing what was going to happen, "I mean everybody were uncertain about their future here because we didn't know if the person that was going to be our president would be understanding". Mariana described as sad, seeing the dreams of many immigrants threatened:

I think it was sad because like here in the US where everybody makes it and you can live your dream and you can do all that you want, all the sudden is being taking away from these people. It was just scary and disappointing.

Luz reported on her feelings at the time, "Anger, sadness, yeah, mostly that, but then at the same time, it kind of like made me sad to realize what was happening".

Isabela talked about Latin@ students that are currently attending school:

We're showing you [candidates to presidency] that we're capable of doing many things that you never thought in a million years that we're able to do like right now, we're all like in the low, silent, hidden because we're all going to school for now.

**Generations.** Participants elaborated on the importance of peer support and the opportunity to share experiences among different generations. Learning about their peers' experiences was valuable. Rosa reported on personal benefit as an adult, "As an adult that class helped me with a lot of things and I think that is why I liked it. It has impacted my life because it was like, at the perfect time".

Julio shared how having the opportunity to share with older generations brought up some reflections about his generation and the transfer of values:

For me, my sense of purpose comes in helping people, so my generation has a lot to do with that as far as eliminating negative perceptions about women and sort of stepping up. The culture can further themselves by showing people that ...there is a lot of love across ages from the youngest to the oldest. I just find that there is a combination of wisdom and of love, and intelligence, which I think is helping us as a culture to get into the workforce now. I find it hard, I find it that is going to be a difficult task for values to be transferred when outside influence is conducive to personalize.

When Ximena learned in class about some of the school resources, she had the opportunity to share the limitations of first generation Latin@ college students. Getting involved in all school activities is a challenge:

I have a full-time job, I don't have the time and I'm just a part-time student. I definitely chose the school because of that. Because it's the closest school to my house, but still, I just never thought of adding activities outside of what I already have because my plate is totally full.



I learned a lot about the age difference...made a big contribution. We had people first generation, second generation, from so many different countries, so you got to see different cultures even though within the Latino culture and I think there was a really good input we had of people sharing experiences. They weren't asked to do it and people opened up and shared experiences in the class. (Luz)

The findings of the research on Latin@ college students' experience in a BLFC are essential to make a contribution to the advance of Latin@ college students in the landscaping of the American education. The interconnectedness of the systems and the bidirectional relationship between human and environment create complex reciprocal interaction that drive Latin@ college students' development (Bronfenbrenner et al., 2006). This research provides a perspective on the influence that these relationships have in the meaning of Latin@ college students' experience in a BLFC. Additionally, findings demonstrated the power of using Funds of Knowledge as a teaching approach that promotes personal development, enhance family relations, and triggers broader social change.

## **Chapter V**

### **Discussion**

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to understand Latin@ college students' experiences in a BLFC. The previous chapter presented themes and sub-themes framed under the Bioecological Perspective of Human Development (Bronfenbrenner, 2005) and Funds of Knowledge (Rios-Aguilar et al., 2011). The dynamic relationship between ecosystems and Latin@ college students is acting as an agent of development, so there is a commitment to determine what specific circumstances maximize that development.

This chapter will move us further, providing insight into these findings in the context of the theory and how the four elements: Process, Person, Context, Time (P-P-C-T) Model (Bronfenbrenner, 2005) simultaneously influence Latin@ student's development as part of an interactive system. Additionally, it will discuss the power of alternative approaches to learning, not only in promoting personal development, but in enhancing family relations and triggering broader social change, as the lives of Latin@ college students were enhanced and optimized, through BLFC engagement.

#### **Research Question:**

What meaning do Latin@ college students make of their experiences of BLFC?

The results of the current study contribute to a greater understanding of how Latin@ college students experienced their participation in the BLFC. The person and the environment were taking into account jointly with the particular strength of having the capacity to identify what Bronfenbrenner calls ecological niches (Bronfenbrenner, 2005).

In this context, the students' development worked in a nested fashion where each system (micro-, meso-, exo-, and macrosystem) expanded and contained the smaller one, influencing each other. Latin@ College students' experiences in the BLFC were the focus of the study where BLFC was identified as proximal process and engine of development (Bronfenbrenner, 2005).

Five themes were identified from the data compromising four different layers (micro-, meso-, exo-, and macrosystem); the mesosystem as a niche that includes interrelations between one or more settings within a given period of development (Bronfenbrenner, 2005) was described as the theme of *Eye Opener*. Participants elaborated about the linkages and processes that took place in their relationships among the BLFC, home, school, and workplace and some of the cognitive and behavioral changes that took place as a result of that interaction. The sub-themes of courage, encouragement, cognitive knowledge, awareness of others, and self-awareness became salient under this theme.

Participants reported on the cognitive competence and socioemotional attributes that allowed them to take their experience outside the classroom to a next level, moving into action, and making a contribution to their personal development. Participants in this study recalled their courage of making a family change as reported by Rosa, making a professional change like the one reported by Sofia and a social change as reported by Mariana. The participants' experiences supported that they were provoked to make a change. They were given a tool and they used it. The findings suggest that participants were working together, teacher and students, developing community that cared for that

phenomenon deeply (Within & Within, 1997).

Participants recalled feeling encouraged to become more active in their families and their communities. The findings revealed participants valued that their voices were heard and honored. The invitation to share their experiences, knowledge (Funds of Knowledge) and the possibility to transfer that into their own personal and professional practices was valuable for them. They also recalled their experience of having control of their language use (English/Spanish) and the ability to share their own experiences while feeling comfortable mixing both languages. The individual as well as group contributions of knowledge and skills were reported by participants as developmentally instigative.

The findings revealed a strong connection between participants' experiences of courage, encouragement and self-awareness. Participants who experienced strong self-awareness and encouragement reported courage to change circumstances in their lives. The self-awareness reported by participants was found helpful in the process of being what they wanted to be, becoming more positive and visualizing opportunities for growth. Participants reported self-awareness as reframing process within themselves which brought necessary changes in their behaviors.

Participants' recognition of the belief system prevailing in their lives was essential for an understanding of the interaction with others in the process of development. Participants recalled that becoming cognizant and understanding of other people's behavior in their environment increased their appreciation and gratitude for them. Luz reported how she was able to understand her parents better after attending the class. The cultural values of the Latin@ culture and the experiences shared in class

provided a sense of meaning and a distinctive perspective for participants in this study. (Perez-Brena, Updegraff, & Umaña-Taylor, 2015).

The sub-theme of cognitive knowledge was reported by participants as an important tool to clear misunderstandings within the Latin@ culture. College produces quantifiable benefits for individuals (Lagemann & Lewis, 2012), and the content presented in class was reported as new to some of the participants while for others was an opportunity to bring back knowledge acquired in the past.

The experiences reported by participant in the *Eye Opener* theme described the complexity of a mesosystem that compromises multiple bidirectional relationships among the settings that contain the developing person (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). The BLFC was perceived as environment of development that promoted courage, encouragement, cognitive knowledge, awareness of others and self-awareness because of that linkage process that students were able to create among some of their microsystems.

*It was Real Stuff* was a close description of the meaning that the BLFC had for participants. It indicated the effect of the BLFC in their lives and its significance as part of their microsystem. The opportunity for open discussions on topics related to Latin@ families in the U.S. was reported as an eye opener opportunity. Rosa recalled feeling like she did in a family reunion, where they were able to take the family in and celebrate. Findings showed that participation in a BLFC provided professional support for those that are in the field working with Latin@ families. Participants reported feeling encouraged to use Spanish more often with their working families and the process of learning new words pertinent to their professional world improved their self-confidence.

A particularly interesting point of the participants' experience was the positive impact of class' participation that was reported by all of them independent of their age. Participants perceived that sharing experiences, knowledge and acquiring new knowledge about the Latin@ culture made a contribution in their lives and became an opportunity for change. In addition, they reported the benefit of Latin@ college students taking BLFC as an elective when entering college.

Two sub-themes became salient in the theme *It was Real Stuff*: teacher, and safe and secure. Participants report on the significance of the role of the teacher in the BLFC. They reported on the influence of the teachers as role models of Latin@ women, supporting the third principle of the microsystem where each member influenced every other member (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). Having a teacher who is from the same cultural background and who speaks both languages was suggested as a main factor for class and students' success. A teacher who could talk about the complexity of Latin@ experiences in the U.S. and was highly aware of her students' generational status was highly valued by participants. In HSIs the role of faculty members has extraordinary potential for the Funds of Knowledge to be recognized and validated (Gonzales, 2015).

Furthermore, findings suggest that participants valued the space provided to recognize the knowledge and skills embedded in their stories and experiences. As a result, participants reported feeling confident, connected, and recognized within the class setting (Gonzales, 2015).

Safety and security became salient in the relationship to the two previous aspects, the BLFC and the bilingual Latin@ teacher. The integration of multiple aspects of the

Latin@ identity implemented in the intersectionality curriculum and followed by deep analysis was reported by participants as supportive of their needs. The participants in the study reported the class as a comfort zone where discussions occurred without concerns for further judgement and offered the support needed to process the information.

The findings of this study are supported by principles of negotiation discussed by Luke (2006). When teacher and students share responsibilities, they build trust and create a safe learning environment in which students feel supported and respected by their teacher and their classmates alike. This type of learning environment encourages students to share personal information and disclose their learning needs. Students' learning needs changed according to the events that were taking place in their personal lives and their work places (Luke, 2006). Participants stated that they had the courage to tell their stories, felt the compassion from others and the authentic connection build among them.

Consistent with Bronfenbrenner (2005) microsystem paradigm this study supported three important principles pertaining to the microsystem: (1) Participants are active agents playing an important part in the developmental process; (2) The developmental process taking place vary as a function of the personal attributes of significant others present in the setting, and (3) Each member of a microsystem influences every other member. One major finding was that participants became cognizant of all three principles.

Macrosystem defined by *What We Know is the Real Deal* referred to participants' knowledge of their Latin@ culture, and the influence of the interaction within all other levels of the ecology of human development. *What We Know is the Real Deal* was

perceived by participants as a facilitator of engagement. Participants reported on the importance of being part of the Latin@ culture in order to be able to understand the challenges faced by the culture and to be able to relate to others inside and outside the culture. Participants reported that discussions about immigration stories, as well as communal, cultural, and spiritual traditions, provided them with new skills (Gonzales, 2015). Furthermore, they became aware of their participation as observers and active participants of the building experience process occurring in the class. Participants took pride in their living experiences and the experiences of their past generations. Isabela recalled her experience by stating that she felt like a book after all the learning she did.

Funds of Knowledge as historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills were essential for participants' interactions. They became 'participant-observers' of exchange of goods, services, and symbolic capital which are part household's functioning (Moll & Gonzalez, 1994, p. 443). In addition, the process of carrying cultural information, has significant implications for the adaptation and persistence of the culture; however, knowledge about value transmission is limited (Perez-Brena et al., 2015). Participants elaborated on different aspects of the culture, making salient comments about diversity, familism, identity, and native language; categories that became sub-themes.

Familism where participants focused on the role of the mother and the Latin@ women. Participants perceived the mother as the center of the family, someone who sacrifices for others, is always there for her family and deserves a lot of respect and consideration. The female gender is enacted by *marianismo* which on the negative side



implies extreme sacrifices for the sake of the family and submission to men; on the positive side, women are spiritual leaders, considered the family pillar, exerting power and influencing the home (Castillo et al., 2015).

Some participants reported this experience as an opportunity to reframe that role for themselves and for their mothers. Rosa recalled making some changes in the way she was treating her mother and encouraged better treatment from her sisters toward their mother. Other participants stated that they gained a better understanding of their parents' behavior and why personal decisions could affect the whole family.

For younger participants, respect was a salient behavior when relating to adults in their families. For the participants who are mothers, respect was a value that they impressed in their children. Mariana recalled she wanted to get "A" in her classes, so she could make her mother proud. Moreover, how for her, it was important that teachers understood that there is more to the story than just wanting to get an "A". Being raised by an immigrant mother invoked a sense of responsibility that provided her with the motivation to excel in her class, her career and her life. The findings support that Latinos' sense of familism motivates success because of the implications of stability and ability to support the family (Bravo, Umaña-Taylor, Guimond, Updegraff, & Jahromi, 2014).

The findings suggest that participants enjoyed the important intercultural differences among different ethnic Latin@ communities within the class. Diversity, as one of the emergent sub-themes, was reported as similarities and differences within the Latin@ culture, and their positive and negative life experiences. Feeling like a melting pot within the class was a clear definition of the diversity experienced by Mariana.

According to Gonzalez and Morrison (2016), there are differences among different college students pertaining to their Spanish language skills, generation, immigration status, SES, and country of origin. Cultural diversity presents individuals with challenges as well as opportunities. Kim (2005) supports the idea that students who grew up in predominantly Latino neighborhoods did not see themselves as a minority until they arrived at the predominantly White campus. Participants recalled their experiences when they started college and how they felt as a minority group, but even more of a surprise was to realize their own differences within the Latin@ group.

The findings suggest that participants struggled creating a balance in their experiences with gender identity. In the Latin@ culture this is marked by the division of what is appropriate for men and women in the culture (Castillo, Navarro, Walker, Schwartz, Zamboanga, Whitbourne, & Caraway, 2015). They reported clarity about their gender identities; however, when it comes to roles and perceptions of other people, they reported having challenges between the female and the male role equalities. Luz, who is married with children, reported the value of having a man as the breadwinner. She appreciates working part-time when needed and being a stay home mom with the kids most of her day. However, she values that her husband also helps with the chores in the house.

Rosa, values her independence and being able to take care of herself. However, she misses a partner that is a gentleman and takes care of her. Sophia became aware of her struggles bringing that equality in the process of raising her two daughters and her son. For Latinos, the family context is the opportunity to expose children to the values

and behaviors associated with their native culture, especially for those that differ from the mainstream society (Umaña-Taylor, Alfaro, Bámaca, & Guimond, 2009). Julio expressed his need to make a difference in his environment by showing the positive side of the male gender. He spoke about his concerns on the negative aspects often embedded in daily news, arts, stories, and cultural icons, constructed, reconstructed and internalized by individuals in the Latino culture. Furthermore, he spoke about how this negative characterization is supported by the disrespectful behavior of peers his age when they are in a couple relationship.

By looking at the data of participants, the findings suggest that the class experience prompted deep reflections about what is happening to women in society and more specifically to women in the Latin@ culture. Ethnicity was integrated with gender identity, cultural identity, career identity (Umaña-Taylor et al., 2014). The freedom of the environmental context of the class allowed them to gain a more comprehensive understanding of how ethnicity identity emerges and develops as a consequence of the daily experiences, relationships and institutional interactions that individuals encounter (Umaña-Taylor et al., 2014). Ethnic identity was no longer perceived in isolation, it was integrated into their adult lives. Expectations from society, parents' roles raising their children, first generations going to college, and the balancing act between two cultures were among some of the topics discussed by participants.

An interesting point of the participants' experience was native language as a main cultural value. All participants appeared to agree that being able to use Spanish fluently was to their advantage. Some regrets were reported by those who either were not exposed

to learn “proper” Spanish or did not support the learning process in their own children. Language was seen as a learning opportunity where individual and community involvement have been determined by the use of the language.

Julio reported on his feelings of non-belonging during his high school years because he was not fluent in Spanish, but he was Latino. In addition, it was the view of the participants that the bilingual interaction that took place in the class, particularly the participants spontaneously and purposely using English and Spanish, created a valuable learning experience.

The fourth theme described as *A Lot to be Done*, was identified as the exosystem, while not directly involving the participants, embraces specific social structure that have an effect in the immediate settings in which participants are found, influencing and determining what happens in their future. HSI became a salient aspect of the data as it pointed out the need for the institutions to inform its students about this designation. None of the participants were aware that the institution they were attending was designated as a HSI. HSIs are the largest and fastest group of institutions that have targeted underserved groups of students (Núñez et al., 2015).

HSIs are designated by their higher enrollment (at least 25%) of undergraduate Latin@ students and they have been celebrated by traditional student outcomes (Núñez et al., 2015). Participants were unable to recall any specific contribution as part of the commitment of the institution under this designation. It was unknown for participants how the institution was building capacity to respond to diverse student bodies and how to

prevent Funds of Knowledge from being dismissed from the mainstream measurements of success (Rios Aguilar et al., 2011).

It was important for participants to understand the role of the HSIs in the U.S. higher education landscape, and how the institution was going to support their future as most of them were the first Latin@ generation attending college. Even though participants lacked this information, they perceived this designation as an opportunity for additional support and changes that facilitate their social mobility. This study's findings, similar to Sánchez et al. (2010), support that participants' attitudes toward family obligations challenge their focus on how to direct their academic lives. Similar to Esparza et al. (2008) participants reported that a sense of responsibility provided them with the motivation to excel in the United States, but not necessarily the resources needed in the process.

Some of the participants commented on recommendations they would like to make on how to improve students' development and relationships between HSIs and families while others reported that the challenge is so big that they do not know where to start. The success of the participants has been attributed to cultural survival practices embedded within strong and consistent family support which introduces the importance of the relationship between family and the events taking place in the HSIs. Familism strongly encourages loyalty among family members while school experience is encouraging independence suggesting that this contextual forces are likely leading to differential academic outcomes (Stein et al., 2014).

Present study suggests that chronosystem was important when looking at

presidential elections and generations as an important characteristics of the *Socio Historical Time* of the BLFC. Participants reported that the election process taking place in the country at the time of the class, provided the platform to explore their feelings about immigration, and Latin@ families in the U.S. Participants shared their feelings of sadness, anger, uncertainty, hatred, anxiety, and fear and none of them recalled feeling positive about the outcome. Participants in the study reported that class discussions addressed feelings of fear, uncertainty and concern that the dreams and privileges of many Latin@ families were taken away.

Generations referred to the experience of sharing time and learning with and from peers who had quite diverse experiences depending on the period in which they live. Participants in the two BLFCs (fall and spring) included 1, 1.5 and 2 generation which was reported as an advantage. This study suggests that sharing experiences among members of different generations was an opportunity for personal and professional growth. In addition, it offered the opportunity to improve Latin@ college students' networking.

Research has shown that Bronfenbrenner's ecology of human development is an interconnected system, which looks at the bidirectional interrelation between humans and the environment while acknowledging learning occurs across complex environments (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). Bronfenbrenner bioecological model of process-person-context-time (PPCT) considers process the core of the model (Krebs, 2009). Bronfenbrenner (1994) stated that what is more revealing about proximal processes is their substantive and theoretical significance as the mechanisms of organism-environment behavioral

interaction that drive development.

The salience of the BLFC as a process highlights the importance of offering Latin@ college students the opportunity to participate in BLFC as learning environment that promotes human development. BLFC offered students the opportunity to build on their own experience and allowed them to make choices throughout the learning process encouraging deep-reflection and critical inquiry. The findings from this study supported the purpose of employing Funds of Knowledge and Bronfenbrenner's theory as a foundation for this research. In the process to understand the joint, synergetic effects of a BLFC on Latin@ College students, culture was represented as the outermost layer context or macro-system influencing the course of proximal processes. At the same time, individuals engaging in the proximal process exerted an influence creating a complex system of reciprocal influence.

In addition, the BLFC allowed them to experience a real connection with others without sacrificing their authenticity. They felt that they did not have to fit in the class because they belonged in the BLFC. Their voices were heard with respect and compassion and no one was ignored. They were present even at times of disagreement, learning how to create transformation on their disagreements. The findings support that participants in the BLFC experienced cognitive and affective development outcomes such as: attitudes, values, beliefs, and self-concept which measure Latin@ college students' success in a non-traditional lens.

### **Limitations**

The results of this study should be viewed with some caution for several reasons.

Bias management is a major challenge for qualitative researchers (Chenail, 2011).

Researcher presented an analysis of the findings by looking backward to the narratives of participants and forward to the possibilities in which innovating practices as BLFC could be implemented at HSIs. The PI identified the biases that were present throughout the research process so the information presented is reflective and projective of the PI's experience as a member of the BLFC and as a researcher.

Further, the design of the study necessitated inclusion of only those who participated in the BLFC at a HSI recognized nationally and who responded to the email invitation, unavoidable limitations in number of participants were present: participation was voluntary and limited to students' response (Merriam, 2009). Also, there was an assumption that participants who responded to the email already had a positive bias about the BLFC. Consequently, the experiences of participants in this study were found to be positive and encouraging of BLFC inclusion. No doubt those who were absent would have further enriched the analysis and recommendations made. This study does not represent the experiences of other Latin@ college students in similar classes or from university campuses in other parts of the United States.

This study relied on participants' retrospective self-reports about their class experiences. Qualitative responses regarding factual memories were analyzed using thematic analysis as a mechanism to retrieve related previous events (Friedman, 1993). Even though unstructured interviews were used to get an in-depth understanding of the participants' experience, there may have been omissions in their recollections making this a potential source of error in the analysis (Brewin, Andrews, & Gotlib, 1993).



One last limitation of this study was the lack of integration of additional individual characteristics of the Latin@ college students as well as additional multilevel ecological systems effecting human development. Even though age and a generational differences were addressed, this sample was limited to ten Latin@ college students, including only one male in the sample. The P-P-C-T model should enable us to identify the human realities that are behind multiple categories and to discover the processes through which these realities shape the kinds of human beings that we progressively become (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). Traditional gender roles within the Latin@ culture are prioritized by a balanced group of males and females. For Latin@ students transition to college involve a change in roles, change in relationships among the ecological niches which brings the importance of the bioecological perspectives of human development in future studies.

### **Implications**

Even though the current study supports the importance of examining Latin@ college students' experiences as they play an important role in their emerging adulthood and future professional identities, future research is needed to further develop these findings. The findings from this study are consistent with previous research that pointed to the need for HSIs to consider the manner in which Funds of Knowledge is implemented in academia (Gonzales, 2015). The introduction of Funds of Knowledge promotes Latin@ student successful development while assisting them in acquiring the blue print of their cultural background. HSIs have extraordinary potential to disseminate knowledge and to make a difference in the landscaping of U.S. education and in the

success of Latin@ college students (Gonzales, 2015).

Cortez (2015) described three institutional structures and practices as critical to support campuses environment for Latin@ college students: (1) culturally sensitive leadership, (2) student centered services, (3) intensive academic and career advising. According to Cortez (2015) it is the responsibility of the administrators to bridge the gap between Latin@ students' desires to come to college and their preparation to succeed.

The study of Latin@ college students' experiences supports that the contexts of human development work in a nested fashion, each one expanding beyond, but containing the smaller one (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). Each one, simultaneously, influences and is influenced by others affecting the innermost unit, in this study, the Latin@ college student (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). From the beginning of the college experience, the interaction between students and the environment is bidirectional and affects their development. Students' personal experience becomes internal and is transformed in the process. The BLFC, as a proximal process, had the form, power, content and direction given by the Latin@ participants (teachers and students) to affect their development (Bronfenbrenner, 2005).

The BLFC was reported by the Latin@ students as an open and empathic space where they were able to find their own way. They didn't feel they needed to fit-in because from the beginning the feeling of belonging was present. Students attended and allowed others to see and experience them. Human beings are hardwired to connect with others and that connection gave students the confidence to hold and explore their culture and beliefs. Beliefs that were cultivated in class throughout the semester. Participants

reported on failure as an option [use of language] where learning occurred and prepare them to be courageous and engaged.

Participants reported experiences of the institution, the class, the teacher and personal development outcomes suggest the need for an institutional transformation. Latin@ college students who are at the bottom of the hierarchy are looking at the redefinition of the institutional identity as shaped by the culture of the organization embedded by the values and beliefs of its members (Hurtado & Ruiz Alvarado, 2015). Latin@ college students are expecting institution-wide actions that support their efforts to succeed. According to Bronfenbrenner (2005), the highest expression of development is the person's growing capacity to remold reality in accordance to human requirements and aspirations. "Human beings create the environment that shapes the course of human development" (Bronfenbrenner, 2005, p. xxvii).

Exposure to own culture blueprint in a safe a secure environment improves cultural competence skills conducive to human development. Three words were registered throughout the interviews - courage, compassion and connection - that helped at times of sensible conversations. By making future professionals more human, we are altering the environmental conditions that are jeopardizing human development (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). Future studies can replicate this study for other cultures in order to create a safe space where students feel their voices are being heard.

The operationalization of this experience will serve to illuminate how HSIs can facilitate developmental processes and allow the formulation of more precise concepts which can offer ideas for policies and programs that actualize conception of human

development from a non-traditional way. Caution must be used in generalizing the findings; however, the implications for colleges seem apparent.

**Future directions**

The Results of this study suggest that more research is needed in the area of Latin@ college students' experiences and their environment. Data suggests that the Latin@ college students' experiences were positive influenced by their participation in the BLFC. Positive personal development outcome as a result of a BLFC participation was reported by participants in this study in the areas of courage, empowerment, cognitive knowledge, awareness of others, and self-awareness. The BLFC as a process involved the properties of the individuals as well as their college environment in the Process-Person-Context-Time Model (P-P-C-T).

Further, research aimed at elucidating the interdependencies across the ecological system, the conceptualization of the effect of multiple forces and the contemplation of human development beyond the formative years as college outcome, can advance the application of strategies that will benefit Latin@ college students' success. Given the importance of non-cognitive traits, it would be valuable to gather more systematic information on those non-cognitive effects of development which appear to be more malleable at later ages.

Research could also explore if outcomes such as increased knowledge about Latin@ culture along with awareness of others and self-awareness, predict that Latin@ college students, as future professionals, are better prepared to work more effectively with members of their culture and in cross-cultural environments. Although multiple

courses exist to help promote cultural competence (Palombaro, Dole, & Black, 2015), they are target to learn about other cultures but their own. BLFC can be incorporated as a cultural competence education strategy designed to engage students and to foster development of cultural competence.

Findings from this study suggests that this experience was affected by a larger context in which the class was embedded, the Latin@ culture and the HSI designation. Individuals often can and do modify, select, reconstruct, and even create their environment. However, this will only emerge to the extent that the person has been enabled to engage in a self-directed action as a join function of his biological resources and the environment in which he or she developed (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). This research improved our understanding of the advantages of having culturally relevant courses and culturally empowering curriculum in postsecondary settings and more specifically in HSIs. Higher education will better serve Lain@ college students by developing BLFC that empower them at multiple levels at entrance level.

Funds of Knowledge when incorporated into curriculum, facilitates the use of resources and provides an explanation for Latino/a academic and non-academic outcomes (Rios-Aguilar, 2010). Utilizing the Funds of Knowledge framework in the classroom is a teachers' option that will offer the opportunity to engage in real-world meaning-making and identity exploration (Wei, 2014). González, Moll, and Amanti (2005) argued that when teachers learn and understand the everyday lives of their students, the educational process is enhanced. Rios-Aguilar et al. (2011) reported that the greatest strength of the framework of Funds of Knowledge is that it highlights and values the resources

embedded in students, families, and communities. The use of Funds of Knowledge enables teachers to develop students' positive disposition to negotiate cultural differences among members of their community. Rios-Aguilar et al. (2011) claimed that working with teachers becomes essential as they need opportunities for meaningful experiences with students and their families. This type of knowledge can be included in the curriculum to make learning more relevant to students (Rios-Aguilar et al., 2011).

When education and institutions utilize resources grounded in Latin@ students' knowledge, they challenge educational patterns perpetuated by the current socio-historical context and build institutional contexts that are more supportive of the Latin@ college students (Rios-Aguilar et al., 2011). The introduction of Funds of Knowledge in a culturally responsive pedagogy (Irizarry, 2007) promotes Latin@ student successful development while assisting them in acquiring the blue print of their cultural background.

In this process students learn the sensitivity and skills needed to sustain our society (i.e., cognitive knowledge, awareness of others, self-awareness). Gay, 2000 stated "Culture is at the heart of all we do in the name of education, whether that is curriculum, instruction, administration or performance assessment" (p. 8). Further, research needs to enhance the efforts to reach out to HSIs to promote Latino culture as the heart of what is done in education to promote Latin@ students' success.

Gonzales (2015) stated that faculty members in HSIs have the opportunity to support students in the articulation and dissemination of knowledge. However, the author in her closing statement makes it clear that the Funds of Knowledge framework will likely resonate with some faculty more than others. Regardless of the approach, faculty

who wish to support their students, need the support of the institutional leadership (Gonzales, 2015).

Rios-Aguilar et al. (2011) suggest four steps to affect positive educational outcomes: (1) Recognition where Funds of Knowledge are identified and acknowledged; (2) transmission, “underrepresented students [should be provided] the cultural and ideological tools to transform” them into capital for useful purposes (p. 177); (3) Conversion “is the process in which students and families convert their Funds of Knowledge into forms of capital” (p. 177); (4) Mobilization, individuals apply knowledge or capital to achieve a specific goal.

The profile of the Bioecological Perspective of Human Development model (Bronfenbrenner, 2005) used to enhance youth and family development has proven to be useful beyond the formative years. Its interdisciplinary and integrative focus on the age periods, processes and its explicit interest in application to policies and programs of development could be very useful at the higher education level.

This study has future implications for policy makers and practitioners of what we know and what we could do to advance theory and applications that promote positive human development (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). Among some of the future directions of this study is the notion that emphasizes the students’ human capacity for growth and continued development, as well as the ability to shape their own development when attending college.

### References

- Acevedo-Polakovich, D., Chavez-Korell, S., & Umaña-Taylor, A. J. (2014). U.S. Latinas/os' ethnic identity: Context, methodological approaches, and considerations across the life span. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 42(2), 154-169. doi:10.1177/0011000013476959
- Allen, O. T. (2016). (In) validation in the minority: The experiences of Latino students enrolled in an HBCU. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 87(4), 461-487. doi:10.1353/jhe.2016.0021
- Altugan, A. S. (2015). The relationship between cultural identity and learning. *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 186, 1159-1162. doi:10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.04.161
- Anthis, K. S., Dunkel, C. S., & Anderson, B. (2004). Gender and identity status differences in late adolescents' possible selves. *Journal of Adolescence*, 27, 147-152. doi:10.1016/j.adolescence.2003.11.010
- Arbelo-Marrero, F., & Milacci, F. (2016). A phenomenological investigation of the academic persistence of undergraduate Hispanic nontraditional students at Hispanic serving institutions. *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education*, 15(1), 22-40. doi:10.1177/1538192715584192
- Barker, G. G. (2015). Choosing the best of both worlds: The acculturation process revisited. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 45(2015), 56-69. doi:10.1016/j.ijintrel.2015.01.001



- Berry, J. W. (1997). Immigration, acculturation, and adaptation. *Applied Psychology: An International review*, 46, 5-68.
- Berry, J. W. (2008). Globalisation and acculturation. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 32(4), 328-336. doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2008.04.001
- Berry, J.W., Sabatier, C. (2000). Acculturation, discrimination and adaptation among second generation immigrant youth in Montreal and Paris. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 34(3), 191-207. doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2009.11.007
- Berry, J. W., Phinney, J., Sam, D., & Vedder, P. (2006). *Immigrant youth in cultural transition: Acculturation, identity, and adaptation across national contexts*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Birman, D. (1998). Biculturalism and perceived competence of Latino immigrant adolescents. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 26(3), 335-354.  
doi:10.1023/A:1022101219563
- Bitew, G. (2016). A qualitative study of the academic and social factors affecting Latino students at a liberal arts college: Accomplishments and challenges. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 75, 57-66. doi:10.1016/j.ijer.2015.11.007
- Blumenstyk, G. (2015) *American Higher Education in Crisis? What Everyone Needs to Know*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Bravo, D. Y., Umaña-Taylor, A. J., Guimond, A. B., Updegraff, K. A., & Jahromi, L. B. (2014). Familism, family ethnic socialization, and Mexican-origin adolescent mothers' educational adjustment. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, 20(3), 389-400. doi:10.1037/a0036527

Brewin, C.R., Andrews, B., & Gotlib, I.H. (1993). Psychopathology and early experience: a reappraisal of retrospective reports. *Psychological Bulletin*, 113, 82-98.

Doi:0033-2909/93/53.00

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1994). Ecological models of human development. In *International Encyclopedia of Education*, 3(2<sup>nd</sup> ed.), 1643-1647. Elsevier Sciences, Ltd., Oxford, England.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1995). Developmental ecology through space and time: A future perspective. In P. Moen, G. H. Elder, Jr., & K. Luscher (Eds), *Examining lives in context: Perspectives on the ecology of human development* (pp. 619-647). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (2005). *Making human beings human: bioecological perspectives on human development*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage publications, Inc.

Bronfenbrenner, U. & Ceci, S. J. (1994). Nature-nurture reconceptualized in developmental perspective: A bioecological model. *Psychological Review*, 101(4), 568-586.

Bronfenbrenner, U., & Morris, P. A. (1998). The ecology of developmental processes. In W. Damon & R. M. Lerner (Series Eds.) & R.M. Lerner (Vol. Ed.), *Handbook of Child Psychology: Vol. 1. Theoretical models of human development* (5<sup>th</sup> ed., pp. 993-1028). New York, NY: John Wiley.

Bronfenbrenner, U. & Morris, P. A. (2006). The bioecological model of human development. In W. Damon & R. M. Lerner (Series Eds.) & R.M. Lerner (Vol.

Ed.), *Handbook of Child Psychology*, 1(14), 793-828. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.

doi:10.1002/9780470147658.chpsy0114

Brown, S. E., Santiago, D., & Lopez, E. (2003). Latinos in higher education today and tomorrow. *Change The Magazine of Higher Learning*, 35(2), 40-47.

doi:10.1080/00091380309604092

Bryman, A. (2012), *Social Research Methods*. (4<sup>th</sup> Ed.) New York, NY: Oxford

University Press. Buckingham, S. L. & Brodsky, A. E. (2015). "Our differences don't separate us": Immigrant families navigate intrafamilial acculturation gaps through diverse resilience processes. *Journal of Latina/o Psychology*, 3(3), 143-159. doi:10.1037/lat0000042

Caelli, K. (2000). The changing face of phenomenological research: Traditional and American phenomenology in Nursing. *Qualitative Health Research*, 10(3), 366-377

Calderón Galdeano, E. & Santiago, D.A. (2014). Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) Fact Sheet: 2012-2013. Washington, DC: Excelencia in Education.

Castillo, L. G., Navarro, R. L., Walker, J. E., Schwartz, S. J., Zamboanga, B. L., Whitbourne, S. Krauss, S., Weisskirch, R., Kim, S.Y., Park, I., Vazsonyi, A., & Caraway, S. J. (2015). Gender matters: The influence of acculturation and acculturative stress on Latino college student depressive symptomatology. *Journal of Latina/o Psychology*, 3(1), 40-55. doi:10.1037/lat0000030

- Chao, M. M., Kung, F. Y.H., & Yao D. J. (2015). Understanding the divergent effects of multicultural exposure. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 47(2015), 78-88. doi:10.1016/j.ijintrel.2015.03.032
- Chickering A. W., & Reisser, L. (1993). *Education and identity* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Charmaz, K. (2006). *Constructing grounded theory*. London: Sage
- Chenail, R. J. (2011). Interviewing the investigator: Strategies for addressing instrumentation and research bias concerns in qualitative research. *The Qualitative Report*, 16(1), 255-262.
- Christmas, C. N., Barker, G. G. (2014). The immigrant experience: Differences in acculturation, intercultural sensitivity, and cognitive flexibility between the first and second generation of Latino immigrants. *Journal of International and Intercultural Communication*, 7(3), 238-257. doi:10.1080/17513057.2014.929202
- Cokley, K. O. (2007). Critical issues in the measurement of ethnic and racial identity: A referendum on the state of the field. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 54, 224-234. doi:10.1037/0022-0167.54.3.224
- Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry & research design* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage
- Cuellar, M. (2014). The impact of Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs), emerging HSIs and non-HSIs in Latina/o academic self-concept. *Review of Higher Education*, 37(4), 499-530

- Cuellar, M. (2015). Latina/o student characteristics and outcomes at four-year Hispanic-serving institutions (HSIs), emerging HSIs, and non-HSIs. In Núñez, A., Hurtado, S., & Calderón Galdeano, E. (Eds) *Hispanic-Serving Institutions*. Advancing Research and Transformative Practice. New York, NY. Routledge.
- Darawsheh, W. (2014). Reflexivity in research: Promoting rigour, reliability and validity in qualitative research. *International Journal of Therapy and Rehabilitation*, 21(12), 560-568.
- De La Trinidad, M. (2015). Mexican Americans and the push for culturally relevant education: the bilingual education movement in Tucson, 1958 -1969. *History of Education*, 44(3), 316-338. Doi.org/10.1080/0046760x.2014.1002015
- deMarrais, K. (2004). Qualitative interview studies: Learning through experience. In K. deMarrais & S. D. Lapan (Eds.) *Foundations for research* (pp. 51-68). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Desmond, M., & Turley, R. (2009). The role of familism in explaining the Hispanic-White college application gap. *Social Problems*, 56, 311-334.
- Few-Demo, A. L. (2014). Intersectionality as the 'new' critical approach in feminist family studies: Evolving racial/ethnic feminisms and critical race theories. *Journal Of Family Theory & Review*, 6(2), 169-183.
- Finley, L. (2002). Negotiating the swamp: The opportunity and challenge of reflexivity in research practice. *Qualitative Research*, 2(2), 209-230.
- Friedman, W. J. (1993). Memories from the time of past events. *Psychological Bulletin*, 113(1), 44-66

- Fry, R., & Lopez, M.H. (2012). *Now largest minority group on four-year colleges and campuses: Hispanic student enrollments reach new highs in 2011*. Washington, D.C.: Pew Hispanic Center
- Garcia-Joslin, J. J., Carrillo, G. L., Guzman, V., Vega, D., Plotts, C. A., & Lasser, J. (2016). Latino immigration: Preparing school psychologists to meet students' needs. *School Psychology Quarterly*, 31(2), 256-269. doi:10.1037/spq0000136
- Garcia-Prieto, N. (1996). Puerto Rican families. In M. McGoldrick, J. Giordano, & J. K. Pearce (Eds.), *Ethnicity and family therapy* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed., pp. 164-186). New York, NY: Guilford Press.
- Gil, A. G., Wagner, E. F., & Vega, W.A. (2000). Acculturation, familism, and alcohol use among Latino adolescent males: Longitudinal relationship. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 28(4), 443-458.
- Gonzales, L. D. (2015). The horizon of possibilities. How faculty in Hispanic-Serving Institutions can reshape the production and legitimization of knowledge with academia. In Núñez, A., Hurtado, S., & Calderón Galdeano, E. (Eds) *Hispanic-Serving Institutions*. Advancing Research and Transformative Practice. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Gonzalez, L. M., Eades, M. P., & Supple, A. J. (2014). School community engaging with immigrant youth: Incorporating personal/social development and ethnic identity development. *School Community Journal*, 24(1), 99-117. Retrieved from <http://www.adi.org/journal/2014ss/SCJSpringSummer2014.pdf>

- González, N., Moll, L., & Amanti, C. (2005). *Funds of Knowledge: Theorizing Practices in Households, Communities, and Classrooms*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Gonzalez, R. G., & Morrison, J. (2016). Culture or no culture? A Latino critical research analysis of Latino persistence research. *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education*, 15(1), 87-108. doi:10.1177/1538192715579460
- Hanson, C. (2014). Changing how we think about the goals of higher education. *New Directions for Higher Education*, 166, Summer 2014. Wiley Periodicals, Inc. Published online in Wiley Online Library (onlinelibrary.wiley.com). doi:10.1002/he.20090
- Hartnett, C. S., & Parrado, E. A. (2012). Hispanic familism reconsidered: Ethnic differences in the perceived value of children and fertility intentions. *The Sociological Quarterly*, 53(4), 636-653. doi:10.1111/j.1533-8525.2012.01252.x
- Horton, E. G. (2006). A comparison of African American and Non-Hispanic White males' perception of familism through the middle school years. *Journal of Family Social Work*, 10(2), 1-15. doi:10.1300/J039v10n02\_01
- Irizarry, J. G. (2015). What Latino students want from school. *Educational Leadership*, 72(6), 66-71.
- Kim, Y. Y. (2015). Finding a "home" beyond culture: The emergence of intercultural personhood in the globalizing world. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 46(2015), 3-12. doi:10.1016/j.ijintrel.2015.03.018

- Kiyama, J. M. (2011). Family lessons and funds of knowledge: College-going paths in Mexican American families. *Journal of Latinos and Education*, 10(1), 23-42.
- Knight, G. P., Gonzales, N. A., Saenz, D. S., Bonds, D. D., Germán, M., Deardorff, J., Roosav, M. W., & Updegraff, K. A. (2010). The Mexican American cultural values scale for adolescents and adults. *Journal of Early Adolescence*, 30(3), 444-481. doi:10.1177/0272431609338178
- Krebs, R. J. (2009). Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theory of human development and the process of development of sports talent. *International Journal of Sports Psychology*, 40, 108-135.
- [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/289805223\\_Bronfenbrenner's\\_Bioecological\\_Theory\\_of\\_Human\\_Development\\_and\\_the\\_process\\_of\\_development\\_of\\_sports\\_talent](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/289805223_Bronfenbrenner's_Bioecological_Theory_of_Human_Development_and_the_process_of_development_of_sports_talent)
- Kumar, A. (2012). Using phenomenological research methods in qualitative health research. *Journal of Human Sciences*, 9(2), 790-804
- Laden, B. V. (2004). Hispanic-Serving Institutions: What are they? Where are they? *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 28(3), 181-198
- Lagemann, E. & Lewis, H. (2012). *Higher. Education Exchange*. In Brown, D., & Witte, D. (Ed.), (pp. 69-72). The Kettering Foundation.
- Laverty, S.M. (2003) Hermeneutic phenomenology and phenomenology: A comparison of historical and methodological considerations. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 2(3), 21-35. doi/pdf/10.1177/160940690300200303



- Lerner, R., Agans, P., DeSouza, L., & Gaska, S. (2013) Describing, explaining, and optimizing within-individual change across the life span: a relational developmental systems perspective. *Review of General Psychology*, 17(2), 179-183. doi: 10.1037/a0032931
- Lerner, R., Wang, F., Chase, P., Gutierrez, A., Harris, E., Rubin, R., & Yalin, C. (2014). Using relational developmental theory to link program goals, activities, and outcomes: The sample case of the 4-H study of positive youth development. *New Directions for Youth Development*, 144, winter 2014. Wiley Periodicals, Inc. Published online in Wiley Online Library (wileyonlinelibrary.com). doi: 10.1002/yd.20110
- Lerner, R. (2015) Promoting positive human development and social justice: integrating theory, research and application in contemporary developmental science. *International Journal of Psychology*, 50(3), 165-173. Doi:10.1002/ijop.12162
- Lorenzo-Blanco, E. I., Unger, J. B., Baezconde-Garbanati, L., Ritt-Olson, A., & Soto, D. (2012). Acculturation, enculturation, and symptoms of depression in Hispanic youth: The roles of gender, Hispanic cultural values, and family functioning. *Journal of Youth Adolescence*, 41, 1350--1365. doi:10.1007/s10964-012-9774-7
- Luke, C. (2006). Changing the way the game is played (and reported). In D. Schwarzer, M. Bloom, & S. Shono (Ed.) *Research as a Tool of Empowerment* (pp.109-139). Connecticut, Greenwich
- Maxwell, J.A. (2005). *Qualitative Research Design: An interactive approach*. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Sage, Thousand Oaks.

- Merriam, S.B. (2009). *Qualitative Research: A guide and implementation*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass
- Miyamoto, K., Huerta, M., & Kubacka, K. (2015) Fostering social and emotional skills for well-being and social progress. *European Journal of Education*, 50(2). doi: 10.1111/ejed.12118
- Moll, L. & González, N (1994). Lessons from research with language minority children. *Journal of Reading Behavior*, 25, 439-456.
- Murphy, J. (2013). Institutional effectiveness: How well are Hispanic serving institutions meeting the challenge? *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education*, 12(4), 321-333. doi:10.1177/1538192713493010
- National Center for Education Statistics, (2003). *Digest of education statistics*, 2003. Retrieved from <http://nces.ed.gov/>
- National Center for Education Statistics, (2010). *Digest of education statistics*, 2010. Retrieved from <http://nces.ed.gov/>
- National Center for Education Statistics, (2011). *Digest of education statistics*, 2011. Retrieved from <http://nces.ed.gov/>
- Nelson Laird, T.F., Bridges, B.K., Morelon-Quainoo, C.I., Williams, J.M., & Holmes, M.S. (2007). African American and Hispanic student engagement at minority-serving and predominantly White institutions. *Journal of College Student Development*, 48(1), 39-56.

- Núñez, A.M. (2011). Counterspaces and connections in college transitions: First – generation Latino students’ perspectives on Chicano studies. *Journal of College Student Development*, 52(6), 639-655
- Núñez, A., Crisp, G., & Elizondo, D. (2016). Mapping Hispanic-serving institutions: A typology of institutional diversity. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education*, 87(1), 55-83. doi:10.1353/jhe.2016.0001
- Núñez, A., Hurtado, S., & Calderón Galdeano, E. (2015) *Hispanic-Serving Institutions. Advancing Research and Transformative Practice*. New York, NY: Routledge
- Overton, W. (2013) A new paradigm for developmental science: relationism and relational-developmental system. *Applied Developmental Science*, 17(2), 94-107. doi:10.1080/10888691.2013.778717
- Page, J. (2013). Hispanics: A diverse population of students to influence the landscape of higher education. *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education*, 12(1), 37-48. doi:10.1177/1538192712454133
- Patton, M.Q. (2002). *Qualitative Research and evaluation methods* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Perez-Brena, N. J., Updegraff, K. A., & Umaña-Taylor, A. J. (2015). Transmission of cultural values among Mexican-origin parents and their adolescent and emerging adult offspring. *Family Process*, 54(2), 232-246. doi:10.1111/famp.12114
- Phinney, J. S. (2003). Ethnic identity and acculturation. In K. M. Chun, P. Balls Organista, G. Marin (Eds.), *Acculturation: Advances in theory, measurement,*

- and applied research*. (pp. 63-81). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Rios-Aguilar, C. (2010). Measuring funds of knowledge: Contributions to Latina/o students' academic and non-academic outcomes. *Teacher College Record*, 112(8), 2209-2257.
- Rios-Aguilar, C., Kiyama, J., Gravitt, M., & Moll, L. (2011). Funds of Knowledge for the poor and forms of capital for the rich? A capital approach to examine funds of knowledge. *Theory and Research in Education*, 9(2), 163-184.
- Rivas-Drake, D., Markstrom, C., Syed, M., Lee, R. M., Umaña-Taylor, A. J., Yip, T., Seaton, E. K., Quintana, S., Schwartz, S. J., & French, S. (2014). Ethnic and racial identity in adolescence: Implications for psychosocial, academic, and health outcomes. *Child Development*, 85(1), 40-57. doi:10.1111/cdev.12200
- Roberts, T. (2013). Understanding the research methodology of interpretative phenomenological analysis. *British Journal Midwifery*, 21(3). 215-218
- Rodríguez, C., Martinez, M. A., & Valle, F. (2016). Latino educational leadership across the pipeline: For Latino communities and Latina/o leaders. *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education*, 15(2), 136-153. doi:10.1177/1538192715612914
- Salas, R., Aragon, A., Alandejani, J., & Timpson, W. M. (2014). Mentoring experiences and Latina/o university student persistence. *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education*, 13(4), 231-244. doi:10.1177/1538192714532814
- Sánchez, B., Esparza, P., Colón, Y., & Davis, K. E. (2010). Tryin' to make it during the transition from high school: The role of family obligation attitudes and economic

- context for Latino-emerging adults. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 25(6), 858-884. doi:10.1177/0743558410376831
- Santiago, D.A. (2006). *Inventing Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs): The basics*. Washington, DC: Excelencia in Education. Retrieved from <https://www.edexcelencia.org/media/512>
- Schmader, T., & Block, K. (2015). Engendering identity: Toward a clearer conceptualization of gender as a social identity. *Sex Roles*, 73(11/12), 474-480.
- Schwartz, S. J., Yip, T., Rivas-Drake, D., Syed, M., Knight, G. P., Umaña-Taylor, A. J., & Lee, R. M. (2014). Methodological issues in ethnic and racial identity research with ethnic minority populations: Theoretical precision, measurement issues, and research designs. *Child Development*, 85(1), 58-76. doi:10.1111/cdev.12201
- Schwarzer, D., & Luke, C. (2001). Inquiry Cycles in a Whole Language Foreign Language Class: Some Theoretical and Practical Insights. *Texas Papers for Foreign Language Education*, 6(1), 83-99.
- Schwarzer, D. (2008). A qualitative assessment of a foreign language whole language class. *Foreign Language Annals*, 36(1), 77-85.
- Seidman, I. (1998). *Interviewing as qualitative research* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Smith, J., & Firth, J. (2011). Qualitative data analysis: Applications of the framework approach. *Nurse Researcher*, 8(2), 52-62

- Stein, G. L., Cupito, A. M., Mendez, J. L., Prandoni, J., Huq, N., & Westerberg, D. (2014). Familism through a development lens. *Journal of Latina/o Psychology*, 2(4), 224-250. doi:10.1037/lat0000025
- Strange, C. (1994). The evolution and status of an essential idea. *Journal of College Student Development*, 35(6), 399-412.
- Szabo, A., & Ward, C. (2015). Identity development during cultural transition: The role of social-cognitive identity processes. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 46(2015), 13-25. doi:10.1016/j.ijintrel.2015.03.019
- Tajfel, H. (1982). *Social identity and intergroup relations*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Torres, C., & Márquez, A. (2002) Reaching higher ground: parental outreach program at the postsecondary level. Los Angeles, CA: Tomás Rivera Policy Institute
- Trevino, N. N., DeFreitas, S. C. (2014). The relationship between intrinsic motivation and academic achievement for first generation Latino college students. *Social Psychology of Education*, 17(2), 293-306. doi:10.1007/s11218-013-9245-3
- Tudge, J., Payir, A., Mercon-Vargas, E., Cao, H., Liang, Y., Li, J., & O'Brien, L. (2016). Still misused after all these years? A reevaluation of the uses of Bronfenbrenner's biological theory of human development. *Journal of Family Theory & Review*, 8(4), 427-445. DOI:10.1111/jftr.12165
- Umaña-Taylor, A. J., Alfaro, E. C., Bámaca, M. Y., & Guimond, A. B. (2009). The central role of familial ethnic socialization in Latino adolescents' cultural orientation. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 71(1), 46-60.

- Umaña-Taylor, A. J., Lee, R. M., Rivas-Drake, D., Syed, M., Seaton, E., Quintana, S. M., Cross Jr., W. E., Schwartz, S. J., & Yip, T. (2014). Ethnic and racial identity during adolescence and into young adulthood: An integrated conceptualization. *Child Development*, 85(1), 21-39. doi:10.1111/cdev.12196
- Umaña-Taylor, A. J., Updegraff, K. A., Jahromi, L. B., & Zeiders, K. H. (2015). Trajectories of ethnic-racial identity and autonomy among Mexican-origin adolescent mothers in the United States. *Child Development*, 86(6), 2034-2050. doi:10.1111/cdev.12444
- Urquijo-Ruiz, Rita E. (2010). Staging the self, staging empowerment: An overview of Latina theater and performance. In N. E. Cantú, & M.E. Franquiz, (Eds.), *Inside the Latin@ Experience*, p.151-172. doi:10.1057/9780230106840
- Vélez-Ibáñez, C. & Greenberg, J. (2005). Formation and transformation of funds of knowledge. In N. González Gonzalez, L. C. Moll, & C. Amanti (Eds.), *Funds of Knowledge: Theorizing Practices in Households, Communities, and Classrooms*, p.47-70. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Vélez-Ibáñez, C & Greenberg, J. (1992). Formation and transformation of funds of knowledge. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, 23(4), 313-335. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3195869>
- Ward, D., Furber, C., & Tierney, S. (2013). Using framework analysis in nursing research: a worked example. *Journal of Advance Nursing*, 69(11), 2423-2431. doi:10.1111/jan.12127

- Wei, L. (2014). Negotiating funds of knowledge and symbolic competence in the complementary school classrooms. *Language and Education*, 28(2), 161-180. doi:10.1080/09500782.2013.800549
- Within, P., & Within, D. J. (1997). *Inquiry at the Window: Pursuing the Wonders of Learners*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Yin, R.K. (2016). Qualitative research from start to finish. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) New York, NY: The Guilford Press.
- Yoon, E. (2011). Measuring ethnic identity in the ethnic identity scale and the multigroup ethnic identity measure-revised. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, 17(2), 144-155. doi:10.1037/a0023361



## **Appendix A**

### **Email to Invite Participants**

Dear Student,

It is my pleasure to offer you the opportunity to participate in a research study that I will be conducting about the Bilingual Latino Family Class (BLFC) that you took as an elective for your Family Studies program (fall, 2015 semester or spring 2016 semester). This study will involve three interviews, conducted at a time of your convenience. Each interview will take approximately 45 minutes and the interviews will take place three weeks apart from each other. Your experience will provide me with a better understanding of the meaning that BLFC had for you, as an individual.

If you decide to participate, you will receive a \$20.00 Visa gift card at the end of the second interview to compensate for your time.

If you are interested, please reply to this email so I can get back to you with additional information about the consent form and to set up the appropriate time for the first interview. You may also send me a text message to 201-310-7214.

I thank you in advance for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Gloria Andrade PhD (Cand)  
Montclair State University  
Family Studies Doctoral Program

## Appendix B

### Informed Consent



College of Education and Human Services

Department of Family and Child Studies

#### CONSENT FORM FOR ADULTS

Please read below with care. You can ask questions at any time, now or later. You can talk to other people before you sign this form.

**Study's Title:** Latin@ college student's experiences in the bilingual Latin@ Family Class.

**Why is this study being done?** This study is designed to gain a better understanding of Latin@ college students' experiences in the bilingual Latin@ family class (BLFC). Research on individual advantages and personal changes, if any, will be explored.

**What will happen while you are in the study?** This study requires three interviews lasting at least 45 minutes each. At the start of the first interview, you will be asked to provide a pseudonym to protect your privacy. The interviews are designed to provide an in-depth understanding of your personal experiences and the meaning you derive from the experiences. The interviews will be digitally recorded and then transcribed. Then the PI will listen to the recorded interviews while reviewing the transcripts for accuracy. Once the audio recordings are transcribed it will be deleted. Transcripts will be kept on a password-protected computer, and consents will be in a locked cabinet to protect your privacy. Faculty Advisor will not have access to any identifiable or potentially identifiable information (including consent forms and transcripts). Once the second interview is completed, you will receive a \$20 Visa gift card for your participation in the study. In addition, the researcher will set up a third interview to expand in information mentioned during the first two interviews.

**Time:** This study will require three meetings, with each meeting lasting at least 45 minutes.

**Risks:** There is no physical risk involved. However, you may feel some discomfort and there is slight risk of emotional harm if you discuss past experiences and your recollection is about difficult times. You will receive a list of resources in the community for you to use as needed.

Although we will keep your identity confidential as it relates to this research project, if we learn of any suspected child abuse we are required by NJ state law to report that to the proper authorities immediately.

**Benefits:** You may benefit from this study because it will offer you the opportunity as a Latin@ to voice your experiences.

Others may benefit from this study as Latin@s. The possibility exists of using this information for program development.

**Compensation**

To compensate you for the time you spend in this study, you will receive \$20.00 gift card at the completion of the second interview. If you withdraw prior to the second interview, you will not be eligible to receive the gift card.

**Who will know that you are in this study?** You will not be linked to any presentations. We will keep who you are confidential. In the event of any publication, we will use pseudonyms to identify participants. (“You should know that New Jersey requires that any person having reasonable cause to believe that a child has been subjected to child abuse or acts of child abuse shall report the same immediately to the Division of Youth and Family Services.”)

**Do you have to be in the study?**

You do not have to be in this study. You are a volunteer! It is okay if you want to stop at any time and not be in the study. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to answer. Nothing will happen to you. Your grade in this course or other courses will not be affected.

**Do you have any questions about this study?** If you have any questions now or in the future, call or email Gloria Andrade at 201-310-7214 or [andradegl@mail.montclair.edu](mailto:andradegl@mail.montclair.edu)

**Do you have any questions about your rights as a research participant?** If you have any questions, call or email the IRB Chair, Dr. Katrina Bulkley, at 973-655-5189 or [reviewboard@mail.montclair.edu](mailto:reviewboard@mail.montclair.edu).

**Study Summary** I would like to get a summary of this study:

Please initial: \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

As part of this study, it is okay to audiotape my interview.

Please initial: \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

**One copy of this consent form is for you to keep.**

**Statement of Consent**

I have read this form and decided that I will participate in the project described above. Its general purposes, the particulars of involvement, and possible risks and inconveniences have been explained to my satisfaction. I understand that I can withdraw at any time. My signature also indicates that I am 18 years of age or older and have received a copy of this consent form.

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
Print your name here	Sign your name here	Date

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
Name of Principal Investigator	Signature	Date
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
Name of Faculty Sponsor	Signature	Date

## **Appendix C**

### **Interview Questions #1**

RQ1: How did the class affect, if any, your perception of gender identity within Latin@ culture?

RQ1: How did the class affect, if any, your perception of family roles within Latin@ culture?

RQ1: How did the class affect, if any, your views on the role of Latin@ professional?

RQ1: How have you experienced the differences between Latin@ and American culture?

RQ1: What do you think about MSU having received status as a Hispanic Serving Institution?

RQ1: What are the advantages to Latin@ college students, if any, to participate in a bilingual Latin@ family class?

RQ1: What was it like to have a course where you could bring topics related to your experience as Latin@?

RQ1: What is like to have instructors who could speak both of your languages and who understood both of your cultures?

RQ1: What was your experience being in a class where students who could not speak Spanish could not participate?

## Appendix D

### Interview Questions # 2

**\*\*Prior to the interview, IP will review the following information:**

This study is designed to gain a better understanding of your experiences in the bilingual Latin@ family class. This interview will be digitally recorded and then transcribed. Then the PI will listen to the recorded interviews while reviewing the transcripts for accuracy. Once the audio recordings are transcribed it will be deleted. Transcripts will be kept on a password-protected computer, and consents are in a locked cabinet to protect your privacy. At the end of today's interview you will receive a \$20 Visa gift card for your participation in the study. In addition, the researcher will set up a third interview to expand in information mentioned during the first two interviews.

There is no physical risk involved. However, you may feel some discomfort and there is slight risk of emotional harm if you discuss past experiences and your recollection is about difficult times. You received a list of resources in the community for you to use as needed.

You do not have to be in this study. You are a volunteer! It is okay if you want to stop at any time and not be in the study. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to answer. Nothing will happen to you. Your grade in this course or other courses will not be affected.

**Do you have any questions about this study?** If you have any questions now or in the future, call or email Gloria Andrade at 201-310-7214 or [andradeg1@mail.montclair.edu](mailto:andradeg1@mail.montclair.edu)

**Do you have any questions about your rights as a research participant?** If you have any questions, call or email the IRB Chair, Dr. Katrina Bulkley, at 973-655-5189 or [reviewboard@mail.montclair.edu](mailto:reviewboard@mail.montclair.edu).

Q1: What is for you to be a Latin@ college student?

Q1: What are the details of your participation on the BLFC?

Q1: What are some of the experiences you remember from the BLFC?

## Appendix E

### Interview Questions #3

**\*\*Prior to the interview, IP will review the following information:**

This study is designed to gain a better understanding of your experiences in the bilingual Latin@ family class. This interview will be digitally recorded and then transcribed. Then the PI will listen to the recorded interviews while reviewing the transcripts for accuracy. Once the audio recordings are transcribed it will be deleted. Transcripts will be kept on a password-protected computer, and consents are in a locked cabinet to protect your privacy.

There is no physical risk involved. However, you may feel some discomfort and there is slight risk of emotional harm if you discuss past experiences and your recollection is about difficult times. You received a list of resources in the community for you to use as needed.

You do not have to be in this study. You are a volunteer! It is okay if you want to stop at any time and not be in the study. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to answer. Nothing will happen to you. Your grade in this course or other courses will not be affected.

**Do you have any questions about this study?** If you have any questions now or in the future, call or email Gloria Andrade at 201-310-7214 or [andradegl@mail.montclair.edu](mailto:andradegl@mail.montclair.edu).

**Do you have any questions about your rights as a research participant?** If you have any questions, call or email the IRB Chair, Dr. Katrina Bulkley, at 973-655-5189 or [reviewboard@mail.montclair.edu](mailto:reviewboard@mail.montclair.edu).

Q1: Given what you have said about your experience and the significance of the BLFC in your life, where do you see yourself going in the future?

Q1: How does you make sense of your present life in the context of your life experience?

**Appendix F****Local Resources****BERGEN COUNTY**

Care Plus Center for Primary and Behavioral Health 610 Valley Health Plaza Paramus, NJ 07652 (201) 265-8200

Vantage Health System 2 Park Avenue  
Dumont, NJ 07628 (201) 385-4400

Comprehensive Behavioral Health Services Wellness and Support Center 569 Broadway Westwood, NJ 07675 (201) 957-1800

Intensive Family Support Services Comprehensive Behavioral Healthcare, Inc. 395 Main Street Hackensack, NJ 07601 (201) 646-0333

Vantage Health System 93 West Palisade Englewood, NJ 07631 (201) 567-0500

Comprehensive Behavioral Healthcare, Inc. 516 Valley Brook Avenue Lyndhurst, NJ 07071 (201) 935-3322

West Bergen Mental Health Center 120 Chestnut Street Ridgewood, NJ 07450 (201) 444-3550

**ESSEX COUNTY**

Mental Health Association of Essex County  
33 South Fullerton Avenue Montclair, NJ 07042 (973) 509-9777 Mt.

Carmel Guild Behavioral Healthcare  
58 Freeman Street Newark, NJ 07102 (973) 596-4190

Northwest Essex Community Network  
570 Belleville Avenue Belleville, NJ 07109 (973) 450-3100

Irvington Counseling Center  
21-29 Wagner Place Irvington, NJ 07111 (973) 399-3132

**HUDSON COUNTY**

Palisades Medical Center Counseling Center



7101 Kennedy Boulevard North Bergen, NJ 07047 (201) 854-0500

Hoboken Medical Center  
506 3rd Street Hoboken, NJ 07030 (201) 792-8200

Puerto Rican Family Institute  
40 Journal Square - Suite 528 Jersey City, NJ 07306 (201) 610-1446

### **PASSAIC COUNTY**

Mental Health Clinic of Passaic  
1451 Van Houten Avenue Clifton, NJ 07013 (973) 473-2775

SERV Centers of NJ  
777 Bloomfield Avenue Clifton, NJ 07012-1248 (973) 594-0125

New Bridge Services, Inc.  
105 Hamburg Turnpike Pompton Lakes, NJ 07442 (973) 831-0613

New Bridge Services, Inc.  
1801 Greenwood Lake Turnpike Hewet, NJ 07421 (973) 728-3938

New Bridge Services, Inc.  
390 Main Road Montvale, NJ 07045 (973) 316-9333

St. Joseph's Regional Medical Ctr.  
56 Hamilton Street Paterson, NJ 07505 (973) 754-4750

